Plenary Session

State-of-the-Art Lecture

Expert to Describe Contribution of Genetics to Cardiovascular Disease

A n internationally known genetics researcher will deliver a state-of-the-art lecture on “Genetics of Cardiovascular Disease: Getting to the Heart of the Matter” on Friday, Nov. 6. Helen H. Hobbs, MD, is professor of internal medicine and molecular genetics, as well as director of the McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development, at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Dallas.

Since 2002, she has been an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. In partnership with Jonathan Cohen, she has identified genes and sequence variations contributing to metabolic and cardiovascular disorders with a focus on lipids and lipoproteins. Together they showed that rare genetic variations contribute to complex traits in the general population. By concentrating on alleles of low frequency and large phenotypic effect, they have discovered new therapeutic targets for the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

Recently, they identified genetic variants that contribute to the full spectrum of fatty liver disease, extending from hepatic steatosis to cirrhosis.

She holds five patents and has published more than 160 journal articles and book chapters. She serves as a consulting editor of the Journal of Clinical Investigation and is on the editorial boards of Cell Metabolism and eLife.

Among many awards, she has received the Alfred S. Maschke Award for Excellence in the Art and Practice of Medicine and a distinguished alumnus award from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, the Heinrich Wieland Prize, a clinical research prize and a distinguished scientist award from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and the Heinrich Wieland Prize, a clinical research prize and a distinguished scientist award from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

She received her undergraduate degree from Stanford University, her medical degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, and her clinical and post-doctoral training at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital and University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Dallas.

Researcher to Receive Homer W. Smith Award

A cclaimed researcher Dontscho Kerjaschki, MD, will receive the Homer W. Smith Award and deliver an address on “The Podocyte: From Periphery to Center Stage.” Dr. Kerjaschki chairs the department of pathology at the Medical University of Vienna.

The Smith Award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to understanding how kidneys function in normal and diseased states. Dr. Kerjaschki’s research has contributed in several ways, mainly focusing on the biology and pathology of kidney glomerular diseases and on lymphatic vessel biology and pathology. He discovered and defined the roles of the renal glomerulus and lymphatic endothelium in glomerular immune complex diseases, glomerular damage, and proteinuria. A leading expert in the nascent field of human lymphatic biology and pathology, he discovered the first reliable marker for lymphatic endothelial cells. This discovery has opened new avenues of investigation in pathology, ranging from renal transplant rejection to cancer metastasis.

Dr. Kerjaschki has received several major awards and was elected a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and a member of the German National Academy of Sciences. He served as president of the German Society of Pathology.

He has served on the editorial boards of several journals, including the Journal of the American Society of Nephrology and Journal of Clinical Investigation. He was associate editor of the American Journal of Pathology. His own publications currently number 245.

Dr. Kerjaschki received his medical degree and his license for pathology and cytology from the University of Vienna in the 1970s. As an associate professor at the University of Vienna he specialized in renal pathology. During the 1980s, he was a visiting professor in the departments of cell biology at Yale University and the University of California, San Diego.

Homer W. Smith

Homer W. Smith was chairman of physiology at the University of Virginia before moving in 1928 to New York University (NYU). As director of the Physiology Laboratories at NYU, he developed and refined the concepts of glomerular filtration and tubular absorption and secretion of solutes.

The clarity of Dr. Smith’s logic and the skill with which he explained his ideas transformed them into vivid and powerful concepts that are the cornerstones of our present understanding of normal and abnormal renal function. He attracted the best and brightest to the field, to NYU, and to the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory, where he spent many summers studying renal physiology in fish.

The Homer W. Smith award recognizes individuals who contribute to our basic understanding of how the kidneys function in health and disease.