

Proteinuria Expert to Speak on Podocyte Drug Targeting



Mario Schiffer, MD, MBA

A researcher who has spent 20 years investigating proteinuria causes and treatments will deliver the Michelle P. Winn, MD, Endowed Lectureship on “Drug Targeting of the Podocyte Actin Cytoskeleton.”

Mario Schiffer, MD, MBA, professor of medicine, director of the department of nephrology and hypertension, and head of the department of internal medicine at the University Hospital Erlangen in Germany will speak on Thursday, Oct. 22.

Dr. Schiffer began his research into proteinuria development as a postdoctoral fellow at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. His research using mouse models led to his discovery of a novel pathway for apoptosis in podocytes and the

characterization of several novel pathways for podocyte loss.

After four years of postdoctoral training, Dr. Schiffer returned to his native Germany, where he became an independent investigator with funding from the German Research Council. He expanded his research to investigate pathways in proteinuric human diseases such as diabetic glomerulosclerosis, membranous glomerulonephritis, and transplant glomerulopathy.

He developed an effective measure of proteinuria in zebrafish larvae that permitted the monitoring of proteinuria in mutant as well as in morphant zebrafish larvae. That approach enabled him to perform rapid screening of novel genes involved in proteinuria development and study novel potential treatment targets. He collaborated with several other researchers—including the lectureship’s namesake, Dr. Michelle P. Winn—to produce a series of peer-reviewed publications about this novel method.

His main scientific goal is the identification of novel treatments for albuminuria. His high-throughput screening system to identify novel candidate genes involved in the pathogenesis of glomerular kidney diseases is being used by other researchers in the field worldwide. His zebrafish approach can be used to screen compounds and substances to treat early stages of proteinuric kidney disease.

In addition to his proteinuria research, Dr. Schiffer developed a strong clinical background in general nephrology, glomerular diseases, and transplant nephrology. This expertise was recognized in 2010 when he was awarded the Heisenberg Professorship for Transplant Nephrology. Among his many honors, Dr. Schiffer has received the Franz Volhard Award of the Germany Society of Nephrology, Hans U. Zollinger Award of the German Society of Nephrology, and Nils Alwall Award of the German Association for Clinical Nephrology.

He received his medical degree from the Free University of Berlin.

CRRT Expert to Deliver Address on Electrolyte Abnormalities



Ashita Tolwani, MD, MSc

The title of the Burton D. Rose, MD, Endowed Lectureship will be “Managing Electrolyte Abnormalities on Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy (CRRT).” The speaker will be Ashita Tolwani, MD, MSc, professor of medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). The lecture is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 22.

“My research focus is on the clinical aspects of CRRT in the treatment of acute kidney injury in the ICU and more specifically with the use of citrate anticoagulation,” Dr. Tolwani said. “UAB has been a pioneering research institution in CRRT. We currently have 25 CRRT machines providing over 5000 patient-days of treatment a year. There is even a group in Australia that has named their anticoagulation protocol, ‘The Modified Alabama

Protocol,’ based on the protocol that was developed at UAB.”

Dr. Tolwani has performed extensive clinical outcomes research in AKI and CRRT, with a particular focus on citrate anticoagulation. She is the director of ICU nephrology at UAB and heads the CRRT program. She organizes an annual UAB CRRT academy for trainees, practicing physicians, and nurses from across the United States. She also teaches CRRT courses nationally and internationally.

Dr. Tolwani completed a combined nephrology and critical care fellowship. “Doing a combined fellowship allowed me the opportunity to handle a little bit of everything in internal medicine and still be able to do many procedures that attracted me to critical care in the first place,” she said. “With this I have been able to find my academic niche in ICU nephrology that has allowed for many new career opportunities.”

Dr. Tolwani directed the UAB nephrology fellowship program from 2002 to 2010 and is now associate program director.

She serves on the editorial boards of *CJASN* and *Kidney International Reports*. She is co-course director of the ASN critical care nephrology pre-course; is on the organizing committee of the Acute Kidney Injury and CRRT International Conference on Advances in Critical Care Nephrology; and is a workgroup member of the ASN initiative, AKI!Now: Promoting Excellence in the Prevention and Treatment of Acute Kidney Injury.

She received her medical degree from the UAB School of Medicine, where she also completed her internal medicine residency and nephrology fellowship. She became a faculty member in 1999. She also has a master’s in epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Public Health Policy Expert to Discuss COVID-19



Nicole (Nicki) Lurie, MD, MSPH

Public health leader Nicole (Nicki) Lurie, MD, MSPH, will deliver the Christopher R. Blogg, MD, Endowed Lectureship on “Kidney Care and the COVID-19 Experience.”

Dr. Lurie is a physician, professor of medicine, and public health official who is internationally renowned as a health services researcher and policy expert. Her long history in the health services research field has focused on access to and quality of care, managed care, mental health, prevention, public health infrastructure and preparedness, and health disparities.

She will discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped America’s emergency response infrastructure and changed kidney care in ways that are likely here to stay. Her talk will provide a big-picture view of the government response to COVID-19, how kidney patients were uniquely affected, and lessons for the kidney community in preparing for future pandemics. Her lecture will be part of a session on “Policy in a Post-COVID World.”

Dr. Lurie served as the assistant secretary for preparedness and response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during the Obama administration. In this role, she provided leadership in preventing, responding to, and recovering from public health emergencies and disasters.

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A consultant to the World Bank and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Initiatives, she has also served as medical advisor to the commissioner at the Minnesota department of

health and as professor in the University of Minnesota schools of medicine and public health.

When at the RAND Corporation, her focus was on access to and quality of care, health equity, and population health. She has led several successful community-wide initiatives to improve the health of underserved populations.

She was senior editor of *Health Services Research* and served on editorial boards and as a reviewer for numerous journals. She served as president of the Society of General Internal Medicine and on the board of directors for Academy Health.

Dr. Lurie has received many awards, including the Association for Health Services’ young investigator award, the American Federation of Clinical Research’s Nellie Westerman Prize for Research in Ethics, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine’s distinguished alumni award.

Dr. Lurie attended medical school at the University of Pennsylvania and completed her residency and master’s degree at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she was also a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation clinical scholar.