

# THE BRIDGE



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS  
FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES



ACCELERATING DISCOVERIES TOWARD BETTER HEALTH

SEPTEMBER  
2012

## The Next Big Thing?

### Comparative Effectiveness Research Focuses on Outcomes



Bradley Martin, Ph.D., Pharm.D., and Mick Tilford, Ph.D., lead the Translational Research Institute's Comparative Effectiveness Research program.

The increasing excitement nationally about comparative effectiveness research can be heard in the voices of Bradley Martin, Ph.D., Pharm.D., and Mick Tilford, Ph.D., two veteran UAMS researchers.

"The potential for this research is huge," said Tilford, who along with Martin co-directs the Translational Research Institute's (TRI) Comparative Effectiveness Research program. "We can tap into large-scale informatics databases that go across institutions to answer questions that you wouldn't have dreamed about a few years ago."

The enthusiasm is based on the expectation that such research will lead to more evidence-based, patient-centered treatment decisions that improve care and control costs.

The emergence of comparative effectiveness research in the last decade led Congress in 2009 to establish the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI).

By comparing drugs, medical devices, tests, surgeries and ways to deliver health care, comparative effectiveness research should help clinicians decide which treatments work best for specific patients under their unique circumstances.

### LifeLink™ Database

The Translational Research Institute is providing the tools to grow UAMS' comparative effectiveness research presence. Most notably, TRI purchased access to the LifeLink™ Health Plan Claims

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### Message from Dr. Lowery



Dear Colleagues,  
The Translational Research Institute (TRI) is unique among UAMS' seven institutes in that so many of its day-to-day functions are focused on serving our research faculty.

Our vision at TRI is to facilitate excellence in clinical and translational research to substantially improve health and health care in Arkansas and the nation. Such a lofty goal can be achieved only if we provide the services our researchers need.

We believe the foundation is set with a growing list of quality research resources and a team of enthusiastic, expert staff who will help you at every step of your research project.

Your input is vital, so we hope that you will tell us what we're doing well and what we can improve upon.

I encourage you to contact us at (501) 614-2287 or TRI@uams.edu.

Sincerely,

**Curtis Lowery, M.D.**

Director  
UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI)



Comparative Effectiveness Research continued .....

Database, which includes medical and pharmaceutical claims for more than 61 million unique patients across the United States.

Since it was purchased in April 2010, there have been 20 research utilizations of the LifeLink database. "The LifeLink studies are growing exponentially," Martin said. "That one resource is a major research asset for UAMS, and it's beginning to bear fruit."

Martin and Tilford have incorporated comparative effectiveness research into their teaching, and they are involved in several comparative effectiveness research projects. Martin is a professor and chief of the Division of Pharmaceutical Evaluation and Policy in the College of Pharmacy, and Tilford is a professor and health economist in the Department of Health Policy and Management in the College of Public Health.

Contact Encouraged

As co-directors of the institute's Comparative Effectiveness Research program, they are engaging with more investigators and clinicians to build interest and help facilitate new research projects.

"There are a lot of people on campus who could add to the comparative effectiveness research enterprise, and they need to know we're here," Tilford said. "Clinicians are reading randomized trials every day, and they're asking, 'What's best for this patient?' We may be able to connect them with the data sources to answer some of their questions."

Anyone interested in comparative effectiveness research is encouraged to contact Neikisha Buchanan, who manages the institute's Comparative Effectiveness Research program. She can be reached at nnbuchanan@uams.edu or (501) 603-1845.

Free Society Membership

Did you know that you could become a member of the Society for Clinical and Translational Science (SCTS) at no cost?

The complimentary individual memberships are available through the UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI), which is one of the society's nearly 50 institutional members.

Learn more and join online at the SCTS website, ctsociety.site-ym.com

Mock Magnet

TRI Makes Strategic Investment in MRI Simulator



An MRI simulator purchased by the Translational Research Institute (TRI) has been welcomed as a critical new component for the UAMS Brain Imaging Research Center (BIRC).

At a recent open house and demonstration of the simulator are

Clint Kilts, Ph.D., BIRC director, Curtis Lowery, M.D., TRI director, Sonet Smitherman, MRI coordinator, Jonathan Young, BIRC clinical research coordinator, Lisa Jackson, J.D., R.N., TRI executive director, and Mike Owens, Ph.D., director of TRI's Novel Methodologies and Pilot Studies program.

Acquired through TRI's Strategic Investment program, the \$30,000 simulator is expected to save valuable time for BIRC's Philips Achieva 3 Tesla MRI, streamline data collection and improve data quality as researchers use it to acclimate subjects to an MRI's confined space and sounds.

The Bridge is produced for UAMS-affiliated investigators by the UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI).

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Editor David Robinson

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TRI Director Curtis Lowery, M.D.

TRI Executive Director Lisa Jackson, J.D., R.N.





# Question of the Month

## What is TRI's Strategic Investment Program?

The Translational Research Institute's (TRI) Strategic Investment program supports innovative translational research that falls in these categories:

- Studies that received favorable scores from an extramural funding agency but were not awarded. To improve the likelihood of approval on resubmission, TRI will pledge resources or funding.
- Competing continuation studies that could benefit from demonstrated TRI institutional support.
- An expansion of funded work that creates new avenues for funding, increases publication output or accelerates discovery and delivery.
- For critical studies in pursuit of an investigational new drug application or other expenses related to advancement of new therapies that are not allowable NIH expenses.

To learn more, contact Paul Duguid at (501) 526-0366 or pduguid@uams.edu.

## Scholarship Pays

KL2 Scholar Career Development Awards totaling nearly \$540,000 from the Translational Research Institute (TRI) will allow Anthony Goudie, Ph.D., Tiffany Haynes, Ph.D., and Brooke E.E. Montgomery, Ph.D., M.P.H., to dedicate the next two years to their research projects. Funding support comes from NIH and the College of Medicine. You can learn more about their research on the newsroom page at TRI. [uams.edu](http://uams.edu).

## Core Fusion

Philip Mayeux, Ph.D., Is Helping Keep UAMS Research Facilities Strong



*Philip Mayeux, Ph.D., in his lab, has long-standing NIH-funded research that focuses on the causes of kidney injury resulting from sepsis.*

With more than 20 years experience as a successful researcher at UAMS, Philip Mayeux, Ph.D., is bringing his expertise to bear for a key purpose of the Translational Research Institute (TRI).

Mayeux leads TRI's Translational Technologies Support Center, which oversees an array of UAMS' shared research resources, especially its core facilities.

"The core facilities are vital, and it's my goal to make them more accessible, particularly to new investigators who may not know they exist," said Mayeux, professor and director of education in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. "The Support Center helps keep core facilities strong, which is critical for research and extramural funding."

Core facilities are pay-per-use research laboratories or analytical services. By providing centralized oversight and infrastructure for more than a dozen core facilities administered by various UAMS centers and departments, TRI is helping provide access to high-quality, cost-efficient technologies and services.

Mayeux developed an appreciation of the cores through his long-standing NIH-funded research, which focuses on the causes of kidney injury resulting from sepsis. Kidney failure is one of the major complications of sepsis and doubles mortality.

As a kidney pharmacologist, Mayeux is identifying therapeutic targets by evaluating the ability of certain antioxidant compounds, such as resveratrol, to reduce kidney injury and promote recovery. His studies have appeared in numerous publications, including the February 2012 cover of *Kidney International* journal, which focused on a study of resveratrol in mice models. The lead author was one of his students, Joseph Hunter Holthoff, who recently earned his Ph.D.

In addition to his institutional knowledge, Mayeux, who is this year's Graduate School Faculty of the Year, brings a passion for teaching and a reputation for helping his students soar. He invites all researchers to contact him personally if they have questions about the core facilities or other available technology or analytical services.

Mayeux can be reached at 686-8895, or [prmayeux@uams.edu](mailto:prmayeux@uams.edu). To view a complete list of core facilities, visit [www.uams.edu/tri](http://www.uams.edu/tri).




## TRI AUTHORS

### The following UAMS researchers cited TRI in publications between June 27 and Aug. 27 after utilizing TRI resources or receiving TRI funding:

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### Cite Us!

Thank you for remembering to cite TRI in your publications resulting from studies that receive TRI support. Please note TRI's award numbers: **UL1TR000039** and **KL2TR000063**.