GLOBAL HEALTH & INFECTIOUS DISEASE
HIV/AIDS

Nearly 30 years on from the identification of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) as the causative agent of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the global picture remains decidedly mixed. While the early optimism regarding a quick solution to the emerging epidemic rapidly dissipated, recent immunological discoveries have reinvigorated the search for an AIDS vaccine. Similarly, the success of treatments utilizing combinations of new drugs aimed at different retroviral targets has been offset by the emergence of new drug-resistant HIV-1 strains and the myriad public health challenges presented by such a global epidemic.

The continuing havoc being wrought by HIV across the globe means that despite the tremendous advances already made in the development of anti-HIV medications, the need for continued therapeutic innovation remains as compelling as ever. From research into transmission and epidemiology to the development of innovative treatment protocols, the current spend of over a billion dollars on HIV/AIDS research is surely set to only increase in the coming decades. The difficulties presented to advocates, activists and researchers by such challenges can hardly be overestimated.

From an analysis of the consequences of policy decisions on the burden of disease in vulnerable populations, to lessons that can be learned from studying the progression of the disease in non-human primates, to an examination of how HIV/AIDS has influenced modern drug-design methodologies, this symposium seeks to examine three very different components of this global epidemic.

EVENT SCHEDULE
12:30 p.m. Welcome
1 p.m. Stephen Inrig: “The Making of a Chronic Disease: America and the Problem of AIDS”
2 p.m. Jason M. Brenchley: “Nonhuman Primate Models and Novel Therapeutic Approaches”

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SPEAKERS
Jason M. Brenchley is a tenure-track investigator in the Molecular Microbiology section of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Brenchley’s research aims to better understand the mechanisms that underlie HIV disease progression. Specifically, his group focuses on the development of multiple nonhuman primate models with differing disease progression courses, to study T-cell immunity in HIV-infected individuals or SIV-infected nonhuman primates. By elucidating mechanisms of disease progression, his group has the longer term goal of using this knowledge to develop novel therapeutic approaches. Dr. Brenchley received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas–Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas and then completed a research fellowship at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Vaccine Research Center.

Stephen J. Inrig is an assistant professor of Clinical Sciences (History of Medicine), in the Division of Ethics and Health Policy, in the Department of Clinical Sciences, at the University of Texas–Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Dr. Inrig studies the history of medicine and health policy, with particular focus on the social determinants of health, the process of health policy development, and the consequences of policy decisions on the burden of disease in vulnerable populations. He also specializes in the ethics of clinical research and public health policy on vulnerable children and minorities. His major disease focus is HIV/AIDS. Dr. Inrig spent many years running programs for youth, especially at-risk youth, in Illinois, California, and North Carolina. He received his PhD from Duke University and lives with his wife, a nephrologist, and three children in Dallas.

Eamonn F. Healy is the Brother Lucian Blersch Professor of Science and Professor of Chemistry at St. Edward’s University. His current research focuses on the design of structure-activity probes to elucidate enzymatic activity. The interdisciplinary approach includes molecular modeling for the simulation of inhibitor binding, overexpression of the target proteins and in vitro assays of enzymatic activity and inhibition. Targets include HIV-1 integrase, the c-Kit and src-abl proteins, and the metalloproteinases associated with CXCL16 shedding. Dr. Healy received his doctorate in chemistry from the University of Texas at Austin.
About the Brother Lucian Blersch Symposium

Organized by the School of Natural Sciences at St. Edward’s University, the event is free and open to the public. This symposium honors Brother Lucian Blersch, CSC, a longtime professor of Engineering at St. Edward’s who died in 1986 and in whose name a professorship in the School of Natural Sciences was endowed by a gift from J.B.N. Morris hs ’48, ’52, and his family.

PAST SYMPOSIA

Fall 2009  Hominid Evolution: New Looks at Old Fossils
Spring 2009  Swarm: Bees, Robots and the Intelligence of the Collective
2008  The Evolution of Sociality
2007  The Origin and Search for Life
2006  Biodiversity
2005  Harvest of the Future: Exploring Genetic Alteration of Food
2004  Scientific Modeling from Abstraction to Reality
2003  The Life Sciences of the 21st Century
2002  New Science and Technology at the Nanometer Scale
2001  Advances in Science through Mathematics

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