Clinical trial explores longer time frame for common procedure

The University of Kansas Hospital is joining other high-performing medical centers around the world in a unique clinical study focused on stroke treatment.

The DAWN trial, which opened at our hospital in January, examines the timing of a standard stroke procedure known as EVT, or endovascular treatment. During the minimally invasive procedure, a neurointerventionist uses a small device called a stent-retriever – inserted through an artery in the patient’s groin up to their brain – to remove blood clots blocking large arteries there.

Use of a clot-busting drug is standard within 4 ½ hours after a person begins showing stroke symptoms. EVT can be performed up to eight hours. But in the trial, participating hospitals will perform EVT on certain stroke patients up to 24 hours after symptoms first occur. (An important consideration will be the patient’s physiological factors, such as the amount of “salvageable tissue” visible in a brain CT scan.)

EVT that long after a stroke isn’t revolutionary, but there are no comprehensive, objective data about such procedures, according to Michael Abraham, MD, a neurointerventionist and our hospital’s lead physician on the trial.

“This trial could be groundbreaking,” he said. “It could really open the door to better guidelines for treating patients who suffer ‘wake-up’ strokes, or in those who aren’t sure when their strokes started.”

He estimates the findings could help determine treatment for roughly 20 percent of stroke cases. Nearly 800,000 Americans each year suffer a stroke; 129,000 of them die, making stroke the nation’s fifth-leading cause of death.

The longer window for EVT could be especially important for hospitals such as ours, which often receive stroke patients after several hours of transport from rural Kansas communities.

Just 50 hospitals around the world are participating in the trial, with the nearest in Chicago. That our hospital was selected reflects the stroke program’s growth, Abraham said. The team includes dozens of physicians, nurses and other caregivers in Neurointerventional Radiology, Neurosurgery, Stroke and Neuro ICU.

“Our stroke program has made huge strides over the past five years,” he said. “We’ve increased our national recognition, and now we’re gratified to be part of this important study.”

For information about the DAWN trial, email research coordinator Emily Amaro at eamaro@kumc.edu.
**Events**

*Supporting the supporters –* Join others to hear how they respond to the emotional roller coaster that being a supporter brings, and learn practical ways to manage the feelings that go with it. Topics include riding the emotional roller coaster, factors of resilience and the importance of self-care. The class is 10:30 a.m.-noon Tuesday, April 12, at Turning Point; The Center for Hope and Healing in Leawood. Call 913-574-0900 to register.

*Spring music –* The KU Medical Arts Symphony will present its Spring Concert at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 16, at Battenfeld Auditorium on the main campus. The 35-person orchestra, founded by medical professionals in the metro, features an ensemble including medical students and retired physicians. The performance will feature Mozart’s Overture to Don Giovanni, Beethoven’s Violin Concerto with violinist Zsolt Eder, and Dvorak’s Symphony No. 8. Admission is free. Visit kcmsymphony.org for information.

*Head and neck cancer fundraiser –* “A Celebration of Taste,” the seventh annual tasting event hosted by The University of Kansas Cancer Center’s Head and Neck Cancer Support Group, is 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, April 27, in the Westwood Campus Atrium. Local restaurants will provide samples of their specialties. Guest speaker is KCTV-5’s Neal Jones, a cancer survivor. Cost is $20 per person. Information: Jane Myer or Dorothy Austin, RN, at 913-588-3630 or -6576.

*Free skin cancer screening –* The University of Kansas Cancer Center again will provide what’s believed to be the area’s largest free skin cancer screening. “Melanoma Monday,” which is open to the public and staff, is 1-5 p.m. May 2 in the Dermatology clinic (level 4 of Medical Office Building at the main campus). Registration is required: Call 913-588-1227 (then press 2). Go to midwestcanceralliance.org/mcaoutreach for information.

---

**PROGAM SPOTLIGHT**

**Exploring the potential of stem cells**

In less than three years, The University of Kansas Medical Center’s Midwest Stem Cell Therapy Center has established itself as a regional leader in adult stem cell therapy, research and education.

The center, formed by the Kansas Legislature, employs a team of physicians, scientists and support staff led by Director Buddhadeb Dawn, MD.

“Our efforts range from stem cell production to translation of adult stem cell discoveries to clinical trials, with the overarching focus on patient therapy,” he said.

Stem cells are an important tool in fighting complex diseases. They are renewable, unspecified cells, which means they maintain and repair tissue that scientists can change into cells targeted to repair specific damaged tissue.

The center uses only adult, nonembryonic stem cells located throughout the body, as well as stem cells found in the placenta, umbilical cord and umbilical cord blood – all of which are typically discarded after birth.

Reflecting the center’s focus on therapy, several clinical trial efforts are underway, including a homegrown trial for graft-vs-host disease.

In partnership with The University of Kansas Cancer Center, the study will explore the use of human umbilical cord stem cells to improve outcomes of patients with graft-vs-host disease, a complication that sometimes happens after a bone marrow or stem cell transplant. The team is working with the FDA toward an Investigational New Drug application.

“Some of the diseases we’re investigating currently have no treatment options,” Dawn said. “In the case of a patient diagnosed with steroid-refractory graft-vs-host disease, the survival rate is less than 10 percent. If we can harness the power of stem cells, we can save lives.”

Another trial is investigating if infusing heart-derived stem cells can repair damaged heart muscle. In addition, the center’s FDA-registered Good Manufacturing Practice facility is able to produce a variety of clinical-grade stem cells for use in future clinical trials.

The center also organizes an annual conference and offers valuable adult stem cell related resources on its website as part of education, another key mission of the center. Read more at kumc.edu/msctc.

---

**EXPOSURE**

**Nurses in demand**

With its continued growth, The University of Kansas Health System hosted a Nursing Open House last week that attracted a total of 151 applicants – 92 RNs and 52 LPNs (as well as others). They met with recruiters, physicians and nurses from a variety of areas. At the Outpatient Clinic table, Indian Creek Specialty Care’s Traci Richardson and her ambulatory colleagues were especially busy.
In the News
A recap of recent articles, TV segments and other media coverage of the region’s leading academic medical center

Positive attitude helps cancer patient – KSHB, March 29. Tim Grimes started dancing as a way to stay positive when he was diagnosed with stage IV melanoma. Online videos show him dancing at The University of Kansas Hospital and downtown KC. Now, he dances to celebrate: His brain tumors have shrunk 50 percent. “I’m a big believer in mind-body-spirit issues, and I’m absolutely convinced patients do better when they approach it like Tim has,” said his oncologist, Gary Doolittle, MD, at The University of Kansas Cancer Center.

Another mammogram benefit – Fox 4 News, March 24. Calcium buildup in breast arteries, found in mammograms, also can be an early indicator of heart disease, according to a Journal of the American College of Cardiology study. “We have seen these for years and mentioned in reports, but many times they weren’t acted upon,” said Marc Inciardi, MD, radiologist at The University of Kansas Cancer Center. About 70 percent of women who had calcification in their breast arteries also had it on CT scans of their heart arteries.

High-tech treatment for migraines – KSHB, March 18. Zach Collins, MD, an interventional radiologist at The University of Kansas Hospital, is the only physician in the metro using SphenoCath. The catheter delivers high-strength lidocaine to block nerves. “What we do know is it works for migraines and chronic daily headaches,” he said. “It’s not as good for things like tension or cluster headaches.”

Signs of heart problems – Prevention Health, March 15. Many people fail to recognize heart troubles. Besides watching your blood pressure and cholesterol, health experts warn about signs of potential trouble, including flu-like symptoms, fatigue, light-headedness and shortness of breath. Intense pressure in the chest, or soreness similar to a pulled muscle, could signal underlying cardiovascular disease. “It doesn’t have to be a sharp pain,” said Ashley Simmons, MD, a cardiologist at The University of Kansas Hospital. “It could be subtle, and it sometimes radiates out to your shoulder, arm, neck or jaw.”

Spreading the word – in navy blue
Nurse navigators and intake coordinators at The University of Kansas Cancer Center’s Westwood Campus were decked out in navy blue March 20 in honor of Colon Cancer Awareness Month. Eighty percent of colon cancer deaths could be prevented if everyone age 50 and over had regular colonoscopies. So staff are spreading the word – to patients, referring physicians, local companies and our own employees – that it’s time for a gut check.

Teaming up for adult psychiatric care
The University of Kansas Hospital is in a new partnership involving adult psychiatric inpatient treatment services in Wyandotte County.

The partnership, which began operating April 1, is with KVC Health Systems, a leading national behavioral healthcare organization.

As a first step, KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital employees who provide psychiatric care services for adults will transition to our hospital. The 12-bed adult inpatient area at KVC Prairie Ridge Hospital will be renamed The University of Kansas Hospital-Adult Services at KVC Prairie Ridge.

Employees at our hospital will continue to operate an adult psychiatry unit on the main campus and will see no change in their daily activity.

“As a national healthcare leader, we are committed to providing the full continuum of care for our patients,” said Bob Page, president and CEO of The University of Kansas Hospital.

“This is the first step in a longer-term vision for psychiatric services for adults in Wyandotte County.”

Jason Hooper, president and CEO of KVC Health Systems, said KVC’s expertise in managing and providing inpatient psychiatric treatment “combined with the hospital’s strong infrastructure and reputation for care will further benefit our patients and communities.”

Graduate programs among nation’s best
Graduate programs at the University of Kansas Medical Center again received high marks in the 2017 edition of U.S. News & World Report’s “Best Graduate Schools.” Among public universities, the medical center placed 13 programs in the top 50 in the nation. Notably, the School of Health Professions has three programs in the top 10, and Family Medicine – an area of focus for the medical center, given the state’s shortage of physicians – rose to 11th among public universities.

Here are the rankings and the schools they are part of:

4. Occupational Therapy (Master/Doctorate), School of Health Professions
5. Speech-Language Pathology (Master), School of Health Professions
9. Physical Therapy (Master/Doctorate), School of Health Professions
11. Medicine – Family Medicine, School of Medicine
14. Nursing – Anesthesia (Master), School of Health Professions
14. Nursing – Midwifery (Master), School of Nursing
20. Audiology (Doctorate), School of Health Professions
20. Online Nursing (Master), School of Nursing
22. Medicine – Primary Care, School of Medicine
25. Healthcare Policy and Management (Master), School of Medicine
28. Nursing Practice (Doctorate), School of Nursing
31. Nursing (Master), School of Nursing
37. Medicine – Research (MD-PhD), School of Medicine

The KU School of Health Professions’ Occupational Therapy program is ranked No. 4 in the nation.
Our People

Women’s Hall of Fame – Every year since 1970, a select group of women is inducted into the University of Kansas Women’s Hall of Fame. This year’s class includes Carol Fabian, MD, a highly regarded senior faculty member in KU’s School of Medicine who excels in clinical practice, research and leadership.

Fabian has spent 38 years as a clinical and translational researcher in clinical oncology treatment and prevention. She has seen and evaluated hundreds of women with suspected cancers, devised new approaches to breast cancer diagnosis and published her findings in high-level international scientific journals.

She has also served as one of the major division leaders in the Kansas Masonic Cancer Research Institute, medical director of the Breast Cancer Survivorship Center and current leader of the Cancer Prevention Program.

Fabian is one of six women inducted this year into the Women’s Hall of Fame. A celebration to honor them is Wednesday, April 13, in Lawrence.

“These women are exemplary members of society in both overall impact and outstanding character,” said Kathy Rose-Mockry, director of the Emily Taylor Center for Women and Gender Equity. “The influence of their numerous contributions and achievements is immeasurable, and these women serve as awe-inspiring role models.”

Information technology expertise – Matt Smith, assistant director of systems administration and ambulatory IT at The University of Kansas Hospital, has been honored for his support of an industry association.

Smith received the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society John A. Page Outstanding Service Award. The award, which was started in 1990, recognizes those who give commendable and long-standing contributions to the organization.

“It’s an honor to be recognized in the healthcare IT community,” he said. “I’m extremely passionate about healthcare and finding ways to help the patients. I know personally that better technology can extend lives, and to have that recognized at a national level is very meaningful.”

World champions deserve world-class care.

Official Healthcare Provider of the Kansas City Royals – and the Athlete in You