A fter two and a half years spent in product development and several more months of waiting, Fred Samson, PhD, and John Wood, PhD, received a patent last month for their work on a formulation that prevents damage to small blood vessels during extensive blood loss.

Drs. Wood and Samson make up one of two KUMC research teams to be issued a patent recently for their innovative work in the health sciences. The second team, Senior Research Associate Sunil David, PhD, and Adjunct Professor David Morrison, PhD, both of the Microbiology, Molecular Genetics and Immunology Department, were issued a patent for a process that fights septic shock.

Dr. Wood, assistant professor of Molecular and Integrative Physiology, and Dr. Samson, professor emeritus in the same department, earned their patent by demonstrating that the use of a powerful antioxidant called alpha-lipoic acid prevents damage to small blood vessels during extensive blood loss. The two researchers got the idea for the process while attending a conference in California.

“One of the important potential uses of this formulation is as a resuscitative, protective fluid in treating extensive blood loss, quickly restoring the lost blood volume,” Dr. Samson said.

Drs. David and Morrison designed and created molecules that may protect against septic shock, a condition in which bacteria invade the bloodstream and produce substances that are toxic to the body. The condition affects people whose immune systems have been compromised either from disease or from medications. Currently, more than 300,000 cases of septic shock occur in the United States each year, many of them fatal.

In laboratory experiments, the molecules created by Drs. David and Morrison have protected animals against septic shock. This work could result in specific effective and affordable treatments for the condition.
KU Med prepares as JCAHO steps up unannounced surveys

This past summer, KU Med employees showed how they could “Shine in ’99,” when their efforts surrounding the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) survey earned the hospital Accreditation with Commendation.

Now, it’s time to keep on shining.

During the past few months, JCAHO has increased the number of unannounced, follow-up surveys. As a result, the hospital could be surveyed again anytime after March 1.

To help prepare employees for a possible survey—and to maintain the hospital’s commitment to high standards of patient-centered care—KU Med has recently designed a plan of “continuing readiness.” The plan is directed by Chief Nurse Executive and Vice President of Patient Services Lynn Churchill, and JCAHO Steering Team Co-coordinators Noella McCray, RN, MN, and Kathy Robinson, RN, MSN, assistant directors of nursing.

“We want to retain the many positive developments gained during our preparation for last year’s survey,” McCray said. “And, as always, we want to hold ourselves to the highest standards of patient care.”

The plan includes many of the same elements as the preparation for last summer’s survey. For example, hospital departments will undergo mock surveys between now and April 1. In addition, all departments have recently been sent guidebooks to circulate among staff.

Robinson noted that the major points and “hot buttons” employees should remember in the event of a survey include the hospital’s mission, values and goals, as well as each employee’s role in fulfilling them. Staff should also know and be able to explain the hospital’s performance improvement/problem-solving model, FOCUS-PDCA.

Employees should also know the three organization goals of service, quality and cost, and how they are measured, and review such points as the confidentiality of patient information, staff competency measures, infection control, patient safety, emergency procedures and clinical procedures specific to their area.

“If you are questioned by surveyors, always answer in your own words—not a memorized ‘speech,’” added Churchill. “Remember too that if you don’t know the answer, it’s OK to say so, as long as you say where you can find it.”

Patient satisfaction scores rise; hospital close to meeting its goal

KU Med’s continued emphasis on customer service is paying dividends. During the past 10 weeks, KU Med has scored within the top half of all hospitals in the nation that administer the patient satisfaction survey four times.

“Our performance in the area of patient satisfaction is continuing to improve,” said Bob Page-Adams, vice president for organizational improvement.

KU Med has set its patient satisfaction target at the 50th percentile. This means the hospital has targeted the national average as its initial goal. Based on the current trend in survey scores, the hospital is on track to meet its goal by June 30. Further improvement will allow the hospital to exceed its FY 2000 goal.

“The important thing for all of us to remember is we can’t let up,” Page-Adams said. “As we continue to improve, we need to maintain our focus on customer service—every day, in every interaction with patients.”
Stacey Winckler, daughter of Marianne Winckler, Financial Reporting, suits up for a turn as the “Human Hockey Puck” during KUMC Night at the Blades, Feb. 18. Winckler rode on an oversized puck, which was launched across the ice slingshot-style.

Representing the KU Kansas City campuses at the Feb. 4 Rock Chalk Ball were Irene Cumming, KU Med president and CEO, left, Chris Cumming, DDS, Cindy and Bob Clark, dean of the Edwards campus, and Karen and Donald Hagen, MD, executive vice chancellor of KU Medical Center. The annual event is sponsored by the Kansas Alumni Association to raise funds for the recruitment and retention of National Merit Scholars.

Assistant Professor Chris Crenner, MD, PhD, left, and Department Chair Robert Martensen, MD, PhD, right, of the History and Philosophy of Medicine Department presented Jeffrey Moran, PhD, of the KU-Lawrence History Department with gifts bearing the seal of the Clendening History of Medicine Library and Museum. Dr. Moran was the featured speaker at the Feb. 17 Hixon Hour Lecture.

KCTV-5 health reporter Anne Peterson visited KU Med Feb. 21 for a story on 2-year-old Dylan Phillips of Webb City, Mo. Dylan, shown with parents Rene and Danny, suffered from a rare genetic disorder called glutaric aciduria which caused dystonia, or severe muscle contractions. To correct the problem, Dylan received a pallidotomy, a procedure which destroys affected brain tissue, performed by Associate Professor of Neurosurgery Steven Wilkinson, MD. Dylan is the youngest patient ever to have undergone this procedure.
FOR SALE:
27" Sony Trinitron TV, oak cabinet w/speakers featuring superior sound quality, $100. Call 913-307-0680.

Nearly new sleeper sofa, $300; wicker love seat w/matching fan chair, $75; oak head board w/matching 9-drawer dresser, 24” x 72”, good cond., $150. Call Fran, 913-381-3850.

Estey console piano, $1,495. Call 816-524-8255.

AUTOMOTIVE:

1994 Honda Accord, black, 4-dr., sunroof, 4-cyl., auto., aluminum wheels, anti-lock brake system, AM/FM cassette. Call for details 816-767-1859.

HOUSING:
For Sale: 3BD, 2BA true ranch w/walkout basement, built in 1996, north of river, off 169 Hwy., 1205 NW 72nd. St. Call Brian or Kim, 816-468-6291.

For Rent: 2BD house, just one block from KUMC, LR, DR, front porch, off-street parking, great for small family or two students, $500/mo. Call 913-432-9027.

STUDY SUBJECTS:
Women 25-35 years old who have had at least 1 sunburn needed for a study on hormone receptors. Involves 2-3 short visits and 2 skin biopsies. $200 compensation. Call Karen or Kyra, ext. 8-2029.

Post-menopausal women not on hormone replacement and who have had at least 1 sunburn needed for study on estrogen and the skin. Involves 2-3 short visits and 2 skin biopsies. $200 compensation. Call Karen or Kyra, ext. 8-2029.

Healthy adult subjects, 18-50 years of age needed to participate in non-invasive study of memory and learning. Involves 1 hour visit to the Cognitive Neuroscience Lab for the recording of event-related brain potentials (ERPs or brain waves). For more information, contact Jennifer Vavold, ext. 8-5997.