

**PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE  
SPINAL CORD AND BRAIN INJURY RESEARCH CENTER  
(SCoBIRC)**

**UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY**

**SUBMITTED TO THE  
KENTUCKY SPINAL CORD AND HEAD INJURY RESEARCH TRUST  
(KSCHIRT)**

**DECEMBER 10, 2001**

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**SCoBIRC DIRECTOR**

This report describes our progress in achieving the goals outlined in the 2000 Progress Report and in the five-year plan to establish the Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Research Center (SCoBIRC). Also presented are related SCoBIRC activities including the Invited Lecture Series, Neurorehabilitation Symposium, and Research Symposium. Finally, we present the SCoBIRC goals for 2002 and a revised outline of the five-year plan.

## **SUMMARY**

During the past year we recruited one faculty member, Dr. Alexander Rabchevsky, and four postdoctoral fellows. The KSCHIRT-sponsored symposium, "Advances in Neurorehabilitation Sciences" was a tremendous success. The Distinguished Lecture Series featured eleven invited speakers, in addition to eight faculty candidates. A SCoBIRC web site is now online, and a SCoBIRC brochure has been published listing the research interests of twenty faculty associates.

### **1. GOALS OUTLINED IN 2000 SCoBIRC PROGRESS REPORT**

- **Faculty Recruitment**

Dr. Alexander Rabchevsky has accepted a position as Assistant Professor, Regular Title Series, Tenure-Track, Department of Physiology. We feel very fortunate to recruit Dr. Rabchevsky, as he also received an excellent offer from the University of California, Irvine. Dr. Rabchevsky received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida and subsequently received postdoctoral training at the University of Paris and University of Kentucky. He is currently funded by KSCHIRT and the International Spinal Research Trust. Dr. Rabchevsky's research is focused on interventions and regenerative therapeutics to promote recovery of function following spinal cord injury.

- **Postdoctoral Recruitment.**

Thanks to the generous support of KSCHIRT, four postdoctoral fellows were recruited during 2001. These include Timothy Carbary, Ph.D from Michigan State University, postdoctoral advisor is Dr. Stephen Scheff; Tom Coates, Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, postdoctoral advisor is Dr. Ranu Jung; Scott Strath, Ph.D. University of Tennessee, and Ann Swartz, Ph.D. University of Tennessee, postdoctoral advisor is Dr. David Gater

- **KSCHIRT-SUPPORTED NEUROREHABILITATION SYMPOSIUM.**

The First Kentucky Spinal Cord and Head Injury Neurorehabilitation Symposium "Advances in Neurorehabilitation Sciences" was held on September 27-29 at Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital in Lexington. There were one hundred and

twenty registered participants, primarily consisting of Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists from Kentucky and surrounding states. The meeting was coordinated with the annual business meeting of the Kentucky Physical Therapy Association. The results of questionnaires and informal feedback indicated tremendous enthusiasm for this meeting. A copy of the program is enclosed. The meeting also featured a 'Town Hall' public forum on the evening of September 27<sup>th</sup>, including short presentations from investigators and clinicians associated with the University of Kentucky and University of Louisville. A national Associated Press story featured the research of Dr. Ron Triolo and Dr. James Abbas regarding functional electrical stimulation for standing in individuals with spinal cord injury.

- **KSCHIRT-SUPPORTED RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

The Eighth Annual Kentucky Spinal Cord and Head Injury Research Symposium will be held on June 24-26, 2002 at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Lexington, Kentucky. Ten speakers have been invited and a preliminary program is enclosed.

- **DEVELOP SCoBIRC WEB PAGE AND BROCHURE**

The SCoBIRC web page is online (<http://www.mc.uky.edu/scobirc/>) and the SCoBIRC brochure is enclosed. This brochure was distributed at the National Neurotrauma Society annual meeting in San Diego, and will also be distributed at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Neural Regeneration, Asilomar Conference Center, Monterey, CA, December 12-16, 2001. The brochure lists the SCoBIRC goals and objectives, as well as the research interests of twenty faculty associates.

## **2. ADDITIONAL GOALS OUTLINED IN FIVE-YEAR PLAN AND RELATED ACTIVITIES**

- **SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD**

The External Advisory Board Consists of Dr. Ed Hall, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals; Dr. Brad Stokes, Ohio State University; and Dr. Jerry Silver, Case-Western Reserve University. Each of these individuals visited during the past year and provided feedback on the goals and progress of SCoBIRC.

The Internal Advisory Group consists of Dr. James Abbas, Dr. David Gater, Dr. Steve Scheff, and Dr. George Smith, and Dr. Joe Springer. This group met on a monthly basis with Dr. Geddes to discuss SCoBIRC objectives, invite speakers, and plan the neurorehabilitation and research symposiums.

- **SCoBIRC LECTURE SERIES AND SYMPOSIUM**

Thanks to the generous support of KSCHIRT, we hosted the following speakers during the past year (2001):

- Ed Hall, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals
- David Hovda, UCLA
- Brad Stokes, Ohio State University
- Ed Wirth, University of Florida
- Jerry Silver, Case Western Reserve University
- Lynn Weaver, University of Western Ontario
- Robert Miller, Case Western Reserve University
- Stephen Page, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
- Blair Calancie, University of Miami
- Sam David, Montreal General Hospital
- Chung Hsu, Washington University
- SCoBIRC Faculty Candidates
  - Fiona Inglis, Yale University
  - Ted Dumas, Stanford University
  - Xi Lin, Baylor College of Medicine
  - Jin-Moo Lee, Washington University
  - Lisa Rosenberg, Georgetown University
  - Ashok Shetty, Duke University
  - Ravi Tikoo, Columbia University
  - Alexander Rabchevsky, University of Kentucky

- **NEUROTRAUMA SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**

Twenty investigators from the University of Kentucky attended the Neurotrauma Society annual meeting in San Diego, November 2001. This represented one of the largest contingents and demonstrates the success of KSCHIRT in attracting investigators into spinal cord and head injury research at the University of Kentucky. Also noteworthy is that one of our graduate students was a finalist for the best student poster award.

- **FACULTY DEPARTURES**

Several faculty with interests related to SCoBIRC have accepted positions at other institutions during the past year. Dr. David Gater is moving to the University of Michigan; Dr. Sonia Carlson is moving to Minnesota; Dr. Brian Davis and Dr. Kathy Albers accepted positions at the University of Pittsburgh; and Dr. Phyllis Wise, a KSCHIRT Board member; will become the Dean of Biological Sciences at the University of California, Davis.

### **3. SCoBIRC Goals for 2002**

- **SCoBIRC DIRECTOR SEARCH**

Dr. Geddes will be stepping down as SCoBIRC Director in October 2002. A national search is underway for the SCoBIRC Director. Dr. George Smith is chairing the search committee.

- **RECRUIT ADDITIONAL FACULTY**

There are several strong candidates among the sixteen applications received to date for a SCoBIRC faculty position recently advertised in Science. A shortlist of three candidates has been identified. They will be interviewing in early 2002.

Related to SCoBIRC, a search firm has been hired to identify candidates for the three Cardinal Hill endowed chairs in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

- **RECRUIT ADDITIONAL POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS**

With the departure of Dr. Gater, two KSCHIRT-sponsored postdoctoral positions will become available in 2002.

- **DEVELOP SCI GENE RELATED DATABASE**

In collaboration with the University of Louisville, we propose to develop a Spinal Cord Injury Gene Related Database (SCIGRD). This is directed by Dr. Tim McClintock and will serve as an online repository and searchable database for changes in gene expression following spinal cord injury.

### **4. SCoBIRC Five-Year Plan, Progress and Revisions**

#### **Year 01 (1998-99)**

- Recruit Director (Completed)
- Recruit one Faculty Position (Completed)
- Establish Distinguished Lecture Series (Ongoing)
- Hire Center Staff (Completed)

#### **Year 02 (1999-00)**

- Recruit Clinical Director (In Progress)
- Host Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Symposium (Completed)

- Establish Center Advisory Board (Completed)

**Year 03 (2000-01)**

- Recruit one Faculty Position (Completed)
- Host Rehabilitation Symposium (Completed)
- Develop SCoBIRC Web Page and Brochure (Completed)

**Year 04 (2001-02)**

- Recruit one Faculty Position (In Progress)
- Host Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Symposium (In Progress)
- Recruit SCoBIRC Director (In Progress)

**Year 05 (2002-03)**

- Recruit Postdoctoral Researchers and Graduate Students  
(With the additional KSCHIRT support for Postdoctoral Researchers,  
this has been revised to recruit one additional faculty position.)