

Dr. Scott Grundy Making Healthy Strides In Nutritional Research

"Breathtaking" might be the most accurate way to describe research conducted by Dr. Scott Grundy, professor of internal medicine and biochemistry and director of the Center for Human Nutrition at UT Southwestern, who is setting milestones in the understanding of nutrition and its relationship to health.

Just recently, the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* published a study by Dr. Grundy and Dr. Andrea Bonanome, a research fellow at the Center, reporting a type of saturated fat which does not raise cholesterol. Research indicates that stearic acid is quickly changed into monounsaturated fat by the body.

And it represents the third "safe fat" Dr. Grundy and his associates have discovered.

As the editorial in the *NEJ* emphasized, such research is valuable not only for the generation of new scientific knowledge but for practical reasons as well. As Dr. Grundy himself told local news reporters, discoveries about stearic acid simply means that "lean beef is less harmful than previously thought."

Indeed, it has been speculated that collaboration between medical scientists and agricultural scientists could measurably improve the health of America. Texas itself may reap valuable benefits for the agricultural and food industries in the state.

As if to confirm such potential, the National Academy of Sciences released a landmark report based on a two-and-a-half year study by a committee of 16 U.S. scientists into ways to improve the quality of animal products to make them healthier.

Dr. Grundy, who served on the panel, was asked to provide guidance in medical matters, especially recommendations for nutrient content and composition of animal products. Together with Dr. Gary Smith of Texas A&M, another member of the committee, the two have concluded from research that up to 60 percent of saturated fat in pork can be replaced with monounsaturates.

Dr. Grundy also said the committee's report issued a call for leaner beef and other livestock. He pointed out that cattlemen can immediately begin to develop healthier meat by eliminating feedlot fattening, where cattle are fed corn or other grain just before sale. This increases the ratio of fat to lean meat, resulting in a less healthy product.

This isn't the first time Dr. Grundy's research has yielded practi-



Dr. Scott Grundy

cal results. His studies of Olestra, another "safe fat" that has no calories and is not absorbed into the body, prompted Procter & Gamble to apply to the FDA for approval to sell it nationally. "Olestra," said Dr. Grundy, "is to fat what aspartame is to sugar."

Dr. Grundy has also set milestones with his research into cholesterol-lowering diets. In studies conducted to explore diets that emphasize a reduction of cholesterol as well as saturated fat, he found that "humans are much more sensitive to the types of fatty acids in the diet than they are to cholesterol in the diet."

Dr. Grundy and Dr. Gloria Lena Vega, an assistant professor of clinical nutrition at UT Southwestern, published a study in the May issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* that compares the effects of saturated fat vs. unsaturated fat on total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.

He said the research indicated that different people respond in different ways. "If a person goes on a diet that is low in saturated fat, and if he is sensitive, his cholesterol will come down a lot," Dr. Grundy said. "If he is not sensitive, his cholesterol won't come down much."

From a practical standpoint, that helps physicians decide whether to treat with diet or medication.

Work at the Center for Human Nutrition is continuing — or "trailblazing," as some have put it. Such research may have a significant impact on nutrition-related health problems, which are said to affect either directly or indirectly just about every American family.

Evelyn Whitman Honored Through Establishment of Scholarship Fund

"You cannot say enough about Evelyn Whitman simply because there is nothing that fully expresses the incredible dedication, the hard work and the enormous dimensions of her contribution to the Southwestern Medical Foundation."

Those were the remarks of Dr. Charles C. Sprague, president of Southwestern Medical Foundation, in noting the retirement last December of the Foundation's executive director. After more than four decades of service, Mrs. Whitman is being given lasting recognition with the establishment of the Evelyn M. Whitman Scholarship Fund.

Because of Mrs. Whitman's genuine interest in the medical students attending UT Southwestern Medical School, the trustees chose to establish a \$50,000 endowment fund for the scholarship program, according to Dr. Sprague.

Mrs. Whitman joined the Foundation in 1945. "She grew up with the Foundation," said James W. Aston, chairman of the board. "Her great knowledge and character were vital. She was not only

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outstanding, loyal and efficient — she was just exceptionally helpful. Hers was a great contribution to the development of what we now know as The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.”

George L. MacGregor, chairman emeritus, echoed Aston's sentiments, citing her “long record of remarkable service.”

“She worked long hours and often through difficult problems,” Mr. MacGregor said. “Always she worked with the goal of developing an institution with an image and a reality in the best traditions of this city.”

Her dedication and loyalty, Mr. MacGregor said, are simply “unmatched.”

After beginning as a secretary, Mrs. Whitman quickly assumed other responsibilities. Her role with the Foundation has changed many times. Always with the good of the Foundation foremost in her mind, she assisted many community leaders and department chairmen of UT Southwestern in working out their goals to improve the health care provided here in the Southwest, Dr. Sprague said.

Mrs. Whitman was elected a trustee of Southwestern Medical Foundation in 1987 and, in that role, will remain involved in Foundation activities by serving as a member of the Scholarship and Student Loan Committee and the Audit Committee, Dr. Sprague said.

Dr. Sydney Brenner Serves As 1988 Jonsson Visiting Professor At UT Southwestern

One of the founders of modern molecular genetics and a leading molecular genetics researcher, Dr. Sydney Brenner, served as the 1988 Philip R. Jonsson Visiting Professor at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, making two major addresses on January 19 and 20.

Dr. Brenner discussed major aspects of his most recent research work, “The Molecular Genetics of Nematodes,” as part of the 20th Annual Graduate Research Forum on January 19. In a separate presentation, Dr. Brenner also discussed “The Decipherment of Linear G” on January 20 at the Sigma Xi Graduate Student Research Forum.

Dr. Brenner's lectures were part of a major symposium sponsored by the Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences on “Analysis of the Human Genome in Health and Disease.” Seven top researchers in molecular genetics and related areas participated.

Dr. Brenner, who is a Fellow of the Royal Society, has been working on the nature of the genetic code and the mechanism of gene expression since the early '60s, when messenger RNA (mRNA) was discovered.

The annual Philip R. Jonsson Visiting Professorship was endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Erik Jonsson through Southwestern Medical Foundation.

UT Southwestern News Roundup

As usual, there are many things going on at UT Southwestern. New buildings going up... new developments in research... new people... new programs — here's a roundup of some of the things you're likely to be hearing more about.

Nearly 30 acres of land have been donated to The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Located at Exchange Park, the land will be used for an expansion of campus research programs. Construction of the site's first building, the \$4.8 million Ralph B. Rogers Magnetic Resonance Imaging Center, is due to begin in September.

The Perot Foundation has pledged \$20 million over the next 10 years to The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas for the training of medical scientists and to augment programs in biomedical research. Businessman and education advocate Ross Perot said the funds “will help train young scientists who might well make the important medical breakthroughs of the future.”

University Medical Center topping out was completed in the five-and-a-half-year project that provides a referral, teaching and research hospital for use by The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School faculty. In a ceremony, Dr. Ronald Garvey, president and chief executive officer, announced the hospital's official name — the “Zale-Lipshy University Hospital.”

Dr. Donald Seldin, recently retired chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine at UT Southwestern, has received a prestigious honor given by The University of Texas System. He has been named the University of Texas System Professor of Internal Medicine. Dr. Seldin is the second person to receive a system professorship in the history of the UT System. He will continue to hold a faculty appointment at Southwestern. With the added professorship, he will be a part-time special consultant to the executive vice chancellor for Health Affairs of the UT System, Dr. Charles B. Mullins. Dr. Seldin was also awarded an honorary Doctorate of Science degree from Yale University in May.

Issues on AIDS will be the focus of the Dallas AIDS Planning Commission, which is now headed by Dr. P. O'B. Montgomery Jr., professor of pathology at UT Southwestern. The commission will study virtually all aspects of the AIDS epidemic locally and make recommendations to assist and guide local groups, institutions and citizens in developing a unified and effective community response.

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