Blumgart Award Profile: Prem Soman

In its most revered annual duty, the Cardiovascular Council bestowed the prestigious Blumgart Award to Prem Soman, MD, and PhD, of the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Soman is currently an Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology), and Clinical and Translational Science, at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, where he also serves as Director of the Nuclear Cardiology Labs. Dr. Soman exemplifies the dedication to scientific endeavor in cardiology, and the spirit of hard work that is the hallmark of the Blumgart Award, given in honor of the father of cardiovascular Nuclear Medicine, Hermann Blumgart.

Dr. Soman’s initial medical training was in India, where Dr. Inderjit Anand initiated him in clinical research at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh. His journey in Nuclear Cardiology began in the UK, where he moved in 1994. At the Northwick Park Hospital and Institute for Medical Research in Harrow, UK, he met Dr. Avijit (Tultul) Lahiri, who as Director of Research was at the intersection of clinical investigations in heart failure therapeutics and the emergence of SPECT cardiac imaging in stable CAD.

“I have been fortunate to have fantastic mentors, like Dr. Lahiri, who influenced my thinking at an early state in my career”, Prem recalls. “There are professionals like him that give so much to their colleagues in training, so important in instilling the passion for our field of study.”

It was there with Drs. Lahiri and Roxy Senior, another critical influence, that Prem began a long list of clinical publications that transcended cardiovascular disease-induced dysfunction and the roles of different imaging modalities and techniques.

Another mentor Prem greatly credits for his success is Dr. James Udelson at Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston. After Prem earned his PhD from the University of Surrey in 2000 and a residency in Internal Medicine in Pennsylvania, he began his Fellowship at NEMC in 2002; first in Cardiology, then transitioning to Cardiac Imaging in 2004. During this time, he also attended the ASNC Leadership Academy. He was recruited to Pittsburgh and the UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute in 2005, by Dr. William Follansbee, who nurtured his growth there, and eventual succession as Director of Nuclear Cardiology.

His strong feelings about mentorship and teaching led to his appointment as the Director of the Advanced Cardiac Imaging Fellowship Program at UPMC in 2007. He speaks proudly of his students, graduates and their many publications and awards. As a founding member of the Pittsburgh Nuclear Cardiology Working Group, he served as its Vice President and President-elect in 2007-2008.
After his election to the Cardiovascular Council Board in 2012, mentored the Council’s outstanding intern, Saurabh Malhotra, now a full CV Council board member, and faculty at the University of Buffalo. Prem was elected as the CV Council’s Vice President in 2013, and became the Council’s President in 2014.

During this same time, Prem was also very active in other organizations; elected to ASNC’s Board of Directors in 2011, he remained on their Executive Council and is now Vice President of ASNC in 2016. In the full spirit of the mutual interests of multiple stakeholders in cardiac imaging, he was elected Chair of the American College of Cardiology’s Imaging Council for 2014-2016.

In addition to this long list of volunteering work are interspersed many book chapters, national and international invited lectures, abstract review and editorial appointments. Prem is Associate Editor of the Journal of Nuclear Cardiology, and serves on the editorial board of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology-Cardiovascular Imaging.

So with all of those councils and boards, tasks and appointments, journals and papers, books and students, one might ask what Prem’s true joy is? “That’s easy”, he replies. “My wonderful wife Neema, and my two fantastic kids, Vishal and Kavya, now 18 and 14. That’s my motivation; watching them grow and learn while doing my best to improve healthcare in cardiovascular medicine.”

Prem Soman embodies the vision, dedication and work ethic that have advanced the field of cardiac nuclear imaging. Please join the Cardiovascular Council in congratulating Dr. Soman on yet another outstanding achievement, and don’t miss his Blumgart Award lecture entitled “Keeping Nuclear Cardiology Relevant in a Changing Healthcare Environment” on June 14th at 2:45 PM at the San Diego Convention Center, Room 30DE.

**SNMMI National Election News: Former CV Council President Vasken Dilsizian**

To my colleagues in the Cardiovascular Council,

For this election cycle ending May 5th, I was officially nominated for the Vice-President elect post for the 2016 SNMMI National Election. While this is indeed an honor, it is important to note that we are at an important crossroad in our field. Recent interest in molecular imaging has placed our subspecialty at the forefront of remarkable scientific and clinical advances, as evidenced by high citation of our Society’s Journal. My past and current service to the SNMMI dates back to 1995 and expands beyond cardiovascular diseases. As the Chief of the Nuclear Medicine Division at the University of Maryland, I have seen the growing role of PET-CT imaging in our clinical practice. In order to prepare the next generation of nuclear medicine physicians and clinician-scientists to be competent in all aspects of hybrid imaging, we need to develop collaborative training pathways with radiology and other specialties (Goal #1). I currently serve on the Advisory Committee on the Medical Uses of Isotopes of the NRC, Director-at-Large of the SNMMI Board of Directors, and Chair of the SNMMI Membership Committee. As the President of the SNMMI Cardiovascular Council, I was able to enhance the communication and collaboration between ASNC and SNMMI, including the recently co-sponsored cardiac PET guidelines. I will continue to use my diverse background to work with various subspecialties in order to integrate Nuclear Medicine procedures in patient management and AUC guidelines (Goal #2). We have been successful implementing this with cardiology, and I will strive to achieve the same with other subspecialties. By partnering with other professional organizations, we can strengthen our membership and advocacy efforts (Goal #3), and continue to be creative and forward-thinking in our clinical and research endeavors.

I hope you will support me in continuing to elevate the importance of Nuclear Cardiology within the Governance of the SNMMI.

-Vasken
Intern Update: James Thackeray, PhD

We are excited about a lot of new activity since the Mid-Winter meeting. Our manuscript “Molecular Imaging of the Chemokine Receptor CXCR4 after Acute Myocardial Inflammation” (JACC Cardiovascular Imaging 8:1417-26) received the Young Author Achievement Award from the American College of Cardiology. The award will be presented in absentia at ACC in April.

In the first week of February, I attended the European Society of Molecular Imaging "Winter School" sessions focused on cardiovascular imaging, where we had the opportunity to share some of our research and discuss current trends and developments in the field. It was an excellent chance to connect with leaders of the European imaging community, enjoy the scenery, and survive the ski slopes of the French Alps.

In March, I provided a well received introductory lecture for a session on molecular imaging of myocardium and atherosclerosis, which focused on the evolving challenges and opportunities in the field of cardiovascular imaging.

In addition, I submitted a research grant proposal to the German Research Foundation (DFG) as principal investigator, building on my initial findings as a post-doctoral fellow. We are interested in moving our research in early post-infarct inflammation forward, identifying the relationship between the imaging in the initial days after ischemia and the progression of ventricular remodeling and subsequent heart failure.

One of our medical students, working under the guidance of Dr. Bengel and myself, will present preliminary work in assessing myocardial and neuroinflammation in cardiovascular disease using a novel translocator protein antagonist (TSPO) at the annual meeting of the German Nuclear Medicine Society. This work has been nominated for their Young Investigator Award, and similar elements will also be presented at SNMMI.

We look forward to the annual meeting, and the opportunity to present and discuss more of our work in San Diego.

James

Save the Date!

Make plans to attend the SNMMI Annual Meeting, June 11-15, 2016 in San Diego, CA

The Cardiovascular Council Business Meeting is open to all members and will be held from:

11:00-11:30 AM in Room 23C of the San Diego Convention Center

Plan to attend to hear the election results and meet the new Leadership and Board Members!
Current Session Schedule for Cardiovascular CE Programs:

Saturday June 11:
CAT 3: Molecular and Multimodality Imaging in Cardiovascular Disease - 8:00am - 4:00 pm, Room 33B
CE04: Advances in Nuclear Cardiology - 4:30-6:00 pm, Room 33C

Sunday, June 12:
CE08: Read with the Experts - 12:30-2:00 pm, Room 20A
CE25: Detection and Assessment of Cardiac Sarcoidosis by FDG-PET *(Japanese Society of NM)*
4:30–6:00 PM, Room 33C

Monday June 13:
CE32: Cardiac SPECT Instrumentation- 10:00- 11:30 am, Room 33C
CE39: Advances in Cardiac Protocols - 12:30-2:30 pm, Room 33C
CE46: Cardiovascular Boot Camp I - 3:00 – 4:30 pm, Room 33C
CE53: Cardiovascular Boot Camp II - 4:45 – 6:15 pm, Room 33C

Tuesday June 14:
CE60: Cardiac SPECT and PET Perfusion Imaging - 8:00-9:30 am, Room 33C
CE67: Imaging of Heart Failure - 10:00-11:30 am, Room 33C
CE74: New Targets: Tracers and Techniques in Nuclear Cardiology - 12:30-2:00 pm, Room 33C
CE81: Cardiovascular Inflammation and Infection *(Italian Assoc. of NM&MI)* - 2:45-4:15 pm, Room 33C
CE88: Beyond Perfusion Imaging - 4:30 -6:00 pm, Room 33C

Please visit the Cardiovascular Council website for more information and to join!