

PharmTox Fights COVID-19 Week of October 5-9, 2020

Lance Benson and Brian Parks Receive Milner Scholarship



Congratulations to graduate students, Lance Benson (mentor, Dr. Mu) and Brian Parks (mentor, Dr. Brents), who were selected as the inaugural Dr. Glen and Lori Millner Distinguished Scholars! Lance and Brian will each receive an annual stipend supplement of \$1500 and are eligible to receive the supplement for up to four years or their graduation. Scholars are chosen from second year GPIBS students in the PTET track who are performing their dissertation research with PTET faculty. The new scholarship program was established

through a generous gift to the UAMS Graduate School by Dr. Glen Millner and his wife, Lori Millner, to honor his parents, Charles and Marion Millner. Dr. Milner is a 1989 graduate of the interdisciplinary toxicology program and one of our department alumni.

Paloma Salazar Accepted into UAMS College of Pharmacy

Paloma Salazar, research technician in Dr. Lisa Brents' laboratory, was accepted to pharmacy school at UAMS for Fall 2021. Paloma graduated last May from UA-Little Rock with a BS in Chemistry, and has worked with Dr. Brents part-time since coming to her laboratory as a SURF student in summer of 2018. She was accepted into the program only a couple of weeks after submitting her application. Dr. Brents stated, "I am thrilled but not a bit surprised that she was accepted so quickly." Congratulations, Paloma!



Accepted Publications for Dr. Leung and Dr. Ho



Associate professor, Ricky Leung and professor, Shuk-Mei Ho have a publication in press in *The Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders*. "Open burn pit exposure and concern about the Covid-19 pandemic" is a clinical report from work on their Department of Defense burn pit grant. Dr. K. Palada, who is the VA PI, suggested interviewing a burn pit veteran about his experience and perspective concerning environmental exposure, as well as his concern about the Covid-19 pandemic. The data of this report were presented as the preliminary data for the grant.

Dr. Leung also is an author on another publication which was accepted in the *European Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*. "Pyrrolo[2,3-d]pyrimidine derivatives as inhibitors of RET: Design, synthesis and biological evaluation" is a collaboration with Dr. H.Y. Li from the UAMS College of Pharmacy. Dr. Leung and Dr. Li identified a novel type 2 inhibitor for RET kinase and its mutant, which can effectively inhibit cancer cell migration. This drug can be used to target thyroid and lung cancers in the future.

Dr. Berquist's Paper Accepted for Publication

Assistant professor, Michael Berquist, had a paper accepted to the *Journal of Economic Entomology*. The article, "Methamphetamine-induced open field behavior and LD₅₀ in *Periplaneta americana* cockroaches (Blattodea: Blattellidae)" investigates the motor stimulant and toxic effects of methamphetamine in *Periplaneta americana* cockroaches. Dose-dependent effects of methamphetamine on locomotor stimulation and toxicity in the cockroaches suggested that the high availability, low cost, and relative ease of use of these animals makes them a potentially very accessible option for studying methamphetamine pharmacology. The article was co-authored by former faculty member, Michael Hambuchen and his student, David Findley. Dr. Hambuchen is an assistant professor at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia.

