Lab News

After establishing the Dental Registry and DNA Repository (DRDR), Dr. Vieira has started the second phase of this ambitious project: preparing the SDM faculty to use the resources from the DRDR. When the idea was officially presented at the SDM Research Day, May 2nd 2006, Dr. Vieira highlighted that this project would require effort in two parallel fronts: the establishment of the DRDR per se, and the creation of mechanisms to allow the SDM faculty to take advantage of the newly created resource. To achieve the second goal, Dr. Vieira has created the SDM Research Scholar Program that aims to facilitate the participation of interested SDM clinical faculty in scholarly activities.

The program is designed to foster intellectual interactions among faculty and provide mentoring to develop clinical research projects. Six SDM faculty at Assistant Professor level are officially participating in the recently initiated program: Drs. Andrew Nigra, Marnie Oakley, Jean O’Donnell, Joanne Prasad, Maria Tassopoulou-Fishell, and Christine Wankiiri-Hale. The faculty participated in a daylong workshop held at the Learning Resources Center that had the goal to define research topics proposed by each faculty and to develop them into research protocols, under the guidance of Dr. Vieira, and with the support of Dr. Modesto. Currently, the program participants are working in developing the following research protocols:

- “Comparison of Assessment and Treatment Decisions of initial Carious Lesions Between 2nd and 4th Year Dental Students”, Nigra, Principal Investigator;
- “Gender Influences on Caries Risk”, Oakley and O’Donnell, Principal Investigators;
- “Possible Role of the RUNX2 Gene in the Etiology of Dental Impactions”, Prasad, Principal Investigator;
- “Candidate Gene Studies of Mandibular Prognatism Using DNA Samples Acquired from patients’ Saliva”, Tassopoulou-Fishell, Principal Investigator,

All 5 projects were devised to use the resources Dr. Vieira has created/reformulated at the SDM: The Dental Registry and DNA Repository, currently with 651 recruited subjects and a steady compliance rate of 89%, and the SDM Skull Collection, housed at the Learning Resources Center.

The SDM has provided full support for the establishment of the Dental Registry and DNA Repository, the reformulation of the Skull collection, and for the SDM Research Scholar Program.