



Vieira Lab Newsletter

Lab Meeting Schedule

- **When: July 6th at 12:00**
Where: 371 Salk
Topic: TGFA-IRF6 interaction may contribute to 1% of cleft lip/palate cases
Presenter: Ariadne Letra
- **When: July 20th at 12:00**
Where: 403 Salk
Topic: Update on Research
Presenter: Renata Fragelli



From left to right: Linda Piekuse, Dr. Alex Vieira, Dr. Baiba Lace, and Ingas Prane

Vieira Lab Spotlight



The DRDR is extremely lucky to receive a talented visitor from Brazil, Dr. Celia Sasaki, a dentist who will be assisting in both DNA extractions and in implementing a more functional database, from which researchers can request de-identified data for their dental related research initiatives.

Where are you originally from?

- São Paulo, Brazil

Why did you decide to contact Dr. Vieira about research opportunities?

- I am a dentist in Brazil and am considering a career change to dental research. I wanted to volunteer for the summer to see if I truly enjoyed it. I thought this would be a good opportunity and the experience would enhance my resume.

What do you most like so far about Pittsburgh?

- Everything is so new to me. I guess the one thing that stands out the most is how pretty and interesting the city is with so many trees.

Lab News

Last month Dr. Vieira traveled over 4,000 miles to Riga Stradina University in Riga, Latvia to present a lecture titled "The Many Faces and Facts of Oral Clefts". This trip was the result of many e-mail exchanges between Dr. Vieira and Dr. Baiba Lace, the head of the Department of Human Genetics. Dr. Lace originally contacted Dr. Vieira requesting advice for problems with her experiments. Eventually she invite him to Riga to discuss possible research collaborations and to present a lecture. While in Riga, Dr. Vieira toured the research facilities, met with other faculty and students, and discussed in detail their collaborations dealing with the genetics of cleft lip and palate and its association with cancer.

The trip was very successful; in fact two of Dr. Lace's students are interested in coming to the Vieira laboratory to conduct more research. Dr. Vieira was pleasantly surprised at the warm reception he received while in Riga and at the research being conducted by Dr. Lace. He is confident the collaboration will yield productive results.

Although Dr. Vieira was far away from home and even further away from his native Brazil, he felt a familiar connection to Riga. One of Brazil's favorite drinks, caipirinha, (a drink made from cachaça ((distilled sugar cane))) was extremely popular in Riga. This made the 4,000 mile distance seem much closer than he previously thought.

Dental Registry and DNA Repository News

The Dental Registry and DNA Repository submitted its very first IRB (Institutional Review Board) Continuing Review last month on May 9th and recently received its final approval on June 15. There are several exciting key changes made to the study protocol.

The inclusion criteria will be expanding so that the previous age limit of 85 years old for subjects will no longer exist. In addition, individuals who speak Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese or Korean (but not English), will be able to participate, as the consent forms will be available in these four languages. Turkish and Russian translations are also in the works for a future date.

Brief anonymous surveys will be used to question patients who decline to participate in the study, which will create a better understanding of why individuals decide not to partake in research studies. Analyzing the compilation of these responses may possibly lead to its own study a future date. Another area in which the DRDR project is currently expanding this summer pertains to the study database.

The DRDR currently has 463 participants to date and only 66 declines, keeping the very steady and positive compliance rate of 85%.

As always, if you would like to become involved with the DRDR, please contact Jill Schaefer at (412) 383-5944 or at jss73@dental.pitt.edu