MU professor granted $3 million for Hepatitis B drug research

Generated from a News Bureau press release: NIH Grants MU $3 Million to Develop New Hepatitis B Treatments

COLUMBIA — An MU professor and researcher received $3 million Thursday to study Hepatitis B and to ultimately develop more effective treatments for the virus.

The money was awarded by the National Institutes of Health to fund the research over a five-year period.

Stefan Sarafianos, who teaches molecular microbiology and immunology, will lead the research. Sarafianos studies antivirals and viral replication and entry.

The goal of the Hepatitis B research will be to create drugs that target the virus throughout its different life cycles, Sarafianos said. This would occur by destabilizing the protein shell around the virus' DNA. The treatment might help eradicate the virus, according to an MU news release.

Hepatitis B is a viral liver infection that, in the United States, is responsible for 1,800 deaths per year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hepatitis B can be contracted through body fluids, including sharing needles and childbirth. It can also be transmitted sexually.

Throughout the project, Sarafianos will work with the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, which will receive a portion of the funding. Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh will also help as consultants.

"We are very excited at the prospect of developing a drug that could lead to help the efforts towards eradication," Sarafianos said.
MU researchers find link between childhood language skills, depression

KATIE POHLMAN, 13 hrs ago

Generated from News Bureau press release: “Early-Life Language Stimulation, Skills May Prevent Childhood Depression”

COLUMBIA — Simply talking to your young child, or even playing a rhyming game or two, could reduce his or her chance of developing childhood depression.

MU researchers found that "low levels of language and academic competence are associated with early and enduring mental health issues," according to a study of first-graders published in Prevention Science. Children with language delays in first grade showed more depressive symptoms in third grade than children with average or above average skills.

"Other research has shown for years that (language skills) predict academic skills," said Keith Herman, MU professor in the department of educational, school and counseling psychology and lead researcher of the study. "What's unique about this line of research is that it also has influence over self-perception and depressive symptoms."

Children with low competency in math and reading are more likely to develop negative self-perceptions and views of the world. Those negative thoughts can develop into depressive symptoms, Herman said.

"The idea is kids know how they're measuring up," he said. "They get feedback from teachers and their peers and there's social judgement … (that) kids internalize."

The same can be seen in social settings. Children with low language skills may struggle with skills and friendships which can lead to negative self-perceptions.
Teaching and parents' interactions with a child have a big influence on their self-perceptions, Herman said. On a subconscious level, children who are doing well in school are seen as more likable by both groups of adults. The more likable students tend to have positive interactions; the unlikable students, negative ones.

"It's a social process that is beyond the awareness of adults that we make these subtle judgments and we interact with kids in slightly different ways and they feel it," Herman said.

No group of children is immune to these perceptions, Herman said. The study's results resonate across all socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds. He replicated his study with groups of middle-class white kids from Minnesota; mostly black kids in urban Baltimore, and a group of mostly Asians and Pacific Islanders in Hawaii.

"It seems to be a fairly universal finding at least in the U.S.," Herman said.

Herman and Daniel Cohen, a doctoral student in school psychology who also worked on the study, began the study knowing they couldn't just present a problem, Herman said. They had to present solutions as well.

"We have to find things that we can change that will actually make a difference," Cohen said.

What they found was when children received higher language stimulation at home, they were less likely to develop depression and anxiety.

Herman's suggestions for creating a language-rich environment at home are:

- **Descriptive play** — narrating the parents' and children's interactions like a play-by-play announcer would do for a football game.

- **Have conversations with your children**, even if they can't understand everything you say. Herman said parents often fall into a Q-and-A style of interaction, which can actually hurt relationships they form with their children. Simply talking to them will increase their language skills.

- **Play rhyming games**, especially with younger children.
• **Sound out words** so they can figure out how words are broken down phonetically, Herman said. Even purposefully mispronounce words to see if the child can recognize it and try to correct it.

Cohen said he hopes the research will influence policy decisions and child development programs. If the findings are applied properly, he said, "we have the potential to make population-level impacts on depression-related disability and suicide," the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. and the second leading cause for the 10-34 age group.

For now, though, it starts at home.

**MU council plans how to resolve conflicts**


COLUMBIA – *The MU Ad Hoc Joint Committee on Protests, Public Spaces, Free Speech, and the Press held an open meeting earlier today to discuss how to resolve any future conflicts that may occur on campus.*

The meeting was held as a follow up to one that was held on August 30. The council was going over revisions to policies that are aimed at keeping public spaces regulated while protecting the safety of others.

Faculty member Sandy Davidson said, “many of the policies were already in place. Part of the problem was that some of them were rather obscure in terms of not being that easy to find.”

The committee is made up of faculty members as well as MU administrators, a member of the UM System General Counsel’s Office and students.
Bob Jerry, who is chair of the committee mentioned how important it is for there to be public input on these policies.

“Some of the text [seen] on the screen with the red lines were direct results from suggestions we got at the August forum,” Jerry said.

In the meeting, it was made clear that the University will not interfere with peaceful protest so long as they do not interfere with one of the time, place or manner regulations.

The committee also mentioned that unless it is otherwise expressed, the default rule is that expressive activities are allowed anywhere on campus.

After taking the public’s input on some of the policies, it was also mentioned that students will get an email with all the updated campus rules and regulations.

“Certainly, we’ll continue to be completely transparent about our work on an ongoing forward basis,” Jerry said.

The council also expressed that they understand protesting is meant to disrupt but they hope to use the common understanding of what would be considered a disturbance.

In addition to recommending how public spaces can be regulated on campus while protecting safety, free inquiry, and free expression the committee is also looking to discover how the University can resolve any future conflicts.

Beagle Freedom Project Offers to Settle Mizzou Litigation — for $1 and an Adoption Plan

A group of animal-loving advocates has a deal for Mizzou.

The Beagle Freedom Project, the California-based non-profit suing the University of Missouri over an $82,000 bill for public records related to the care of animals used in medical research, says the university could face up to $900,000 in fines, plus attorney fees and costs, over its Sunshine law missteps.
But the non-profit will settled the suit with Mizzou for just $1 — provided the university agrees to work with it to safeguard the animals' well-being.

Among its demands? That Mizzou develop a post-research adoption program to allow the public to adopt research cats and dogs, as well as place a live-stream web cam in the animals' living area, paid for by the non-profit.

The web cam wouldn't show the animals as they're researched upon, says attorney Daniel Kolde. But it would allow the public to see their living conditions — increasing "public accountability."

Kolde, the Clayton attorney representing the Beagle Freedom Project, says he made the settlement offer in a letter this morning. A spokesman said the university would have no comment, citing the fact that litigation is pending.

Kolde says his clients first filed the Sunshine law requests to see records relating to the 179 animals being experimented upon at Mizzou. The requests asked only for basic info that the university was already required to keep, he says.

But the university responded with bills totaling $82,222. Staffers were being paid as much as $125/hour to compile them, and in some cases, the records would cost as much as $7 a page.

Rather than write a check, the non-profit filed suit. And since that time, it's raised awareness about six beagle puppies who were slaughtered at Mizzou after being blinded and then subjected to test treatment — a case that's generated lots of bad press for the university. A change.org petition has generated more than 130,000 signatures from people asking the university to end animal research.

With well over 100 dogs and cats still being used for research at Mizzou, Kolde says his clients will continue to push — for information and for policy changes.

"These six adoptable animals were already lost," he says. "For these 179 animals we've requested information about, we have no way of knowing how many are alive or dead at the moment."

The nonprofit specializes in rehoming animals used in research. That's not just beagles, but cats and even in some cases lab mice as well. "If they need homes, we want to get them homes," he says. "Our fear is that they'll be dead by the time this lawsuit is over."

In addition to the $1 settlement, Kolde's letter asks that the university agree to waive all future fee demands for the Beagle Freedom Project. The law allows Mizzou to do so if records are not being used for a commercial purpose and are "in the public interest."
Tailgating trash cleared Monday

Sunday cleanup cut from budget.

Evidence of tailgating before the University of Missouri football game Saturday was gone Monday morning, and a spokesman said MU has not received complaints about tailgater trash lying around on Sundays this season despite delays in cleanup.

Before the start of the season MU cut out Sunday cleanup of tailgating areas to save overtime costs as part of $5.47 million in budget cuts to its operations division. The cuts were part of university-wide budget trimming to make up for revenue lost by lower enrollment this year.

Custodians cleared trash in parking lots starting at about 2 a.m. Monday during their regular shifts, and another crew made rounds at 6 a.m., said MU spokesman Christian Basi. That schedule will continue throughout the season to ensure trash is cleared before the school day, he said.

The Tigers lost to the University of Georgia 28-27 Saturday in their first Southeastern Conference game of the season. The game attracted 57,098 people to Memorial Stadium, Mu football spokesman Chad Moller said.

Basi said he surveyed the parking lots after the Sept. 10 MU game against Eastern Michigan University and the lots were “in exceptional shape.” Attendance for that game was 51,192.

The university has received no complaints about trash pickup, he said.

For years, student volunteers have handed out recycling bags to tailgaters. Marnie Sizemore, 47, of O’Fallon, said she and her husband were visited by three students offering recycling bags on Saturday.

Sizemore said the only trash issue she noticed was a lack of trash cans. Near the Sizemores’ tailgating spot, the closest trash cans were overflowing. Trash bags were placed around full trash cans or left in piles.

“All the trash cans are always full,” Sizemore said.

Dan Rathgeber, a 48-year season ticket holder from St. Louis, parked his van in a line on Lot D. He said he was not aware that the university discontinued Sunday trash pickup.
The change had not affected the grassy area where he and other tailgaters station themselves, Rathgeber said. He said they leave their space “spotless.”

“You wait until this place clears out — there won’t be a beer can on the ground,” he said Saturday night. “You know why? Because we’re going to be here next week, and we don’t want to trip over our own stuff.”

University of Missouri presidential candidate interviews continue at St. Louis hotel

ST. LOUIS — More black sedans carrying University of Missouri presidential candidates visited the back parking lot at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel as interviews of semifinalists continued for a fourth day.

The Presidential Search Committee met in closed session for about six hours Sunday and reconvened at 7:45 a.m. Monday, but leaders were not talking about their deliberations.

The 16-member search committee also met at the hotel on Sept. 6 and 7, when the closed sessions lasted about 10 hours each day.

Led by St. Louis attorney Cheryl Walker, a former member of the UM Board of Curators, and Kansas City surgeon Jim Whitaker, the committee has set a goal of naming the 24th permanent president of the university by the end of the year. Interim President Mike Middleton, who has held the job since the Nov. 9 resignation of Tim Wolfe, has said he would not seek the appointment.

The committee also imposed strict confidentiality on its members. Walker, Whitaker and curators Chairwoman Pam Henrickson all have declined even to reveal details that would compromise the identity of interviewees, such as how many semifinalists are being considered.

Emails to plan for a car service for potential candidates, obtained under a Sunshine Law request, are the only clues to the number of candidates being interviewed. In late August, one email from UM System human resources consultant Tracy Fuemmeler indicated five to nine candidates would be interviewed over the first three days at the hotel, but did not say whether additional candidates would be interviewed Monday.

One male candidate left shortly after 10 a.m. and a black sedan was waiting to pick up another interviewee at about noon, raising the total to as many as 11 who made the list as semifinalists.
The university has assigned Sgt. Scott Haywood of the University of Missouri-St. Louis Police Department to guard the back entrance where candidates are loaded and unloaded.

The search is in what then-interim Vice President for Human Resources Kelley Stuck described in June as the “airport interview” phase, 75- to 90-minute face-to-face visits with semifinalists. The next step will be for the committee to narrow the field to finalists who will be interviewed again before the committee makes a recommendation to the Board of Curators.

The finalists will not have any public appearances before the selection is made.

All nine curators who will vote to choose the president are members of the search committee. That panel includes the student representative on the board, a student from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, two faculty representatives — one each from MU and the University of Missouri St. Louis — and a staff member from Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla.

Wolfe resigned amid racial protests on the Columbia campus by a group called Concerned Student 1950 that included a hunger strike by graduate student Jonathan Butler, a campsite on Carnahan Quadrangle and a boycott of athletic activities by the Tigers football team.

**Emails offer clues on search for new University of Missouri president**

Watch the story: [http://mms.tveys.es/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=a9b5fcb0-fb38-4b8c-ab6d-83de11f6c0d0](http://mms.tveys.es/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=a9b5fcb0-fb38-4b8c-ab6d-83de11f6c0d0)

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Newly obtained emails show that five to nine candidates made the cut to be semifinalist for the job of leading the four-campus University of Missouri system.
The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that the disclosure was made in internal emails from last month recommending a car service for presidential search interviews.

Few details have been released about the presidential search. The paper obtained the email through an open records request.

Earlier this month, a 16-member search committee concluded two days of 10-hour meetings. But committee leaders have declined to say how many candidates were interviewed or provide any other particulars.

Protests last year over racial issues on the Columbia campus led to the resignation of former system president Tim Wolfe and Columbia’s former chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

MISSOURIAN

FACT CHECK: Greitens' claim of Democrats investing in primary checks out

ELLEN CAGLE, 1 hr ago

“We had the Democratic Governors Association and the Obama political machine come into a Republican primary to try and rig the election by spending $1 million against me in the last couple of days.”

--Gubernatorial candidate Eric Greitens

Aug. 11, 2016, in an interview on Fox & Friends

Republican gubernatorial candidate Eric Greitens claims Democrats spent $1 million against him just before the August primary election.

On an Aug. 11 Fox & Friends appearance, Greitens said, "We had the Democratic Governors Association and the Obama political machine come into a Republican primary to try and rig the election by spending $1 million against me in the last couple of days."

That number stood out, so we decided to investigate the claim.
We reached out to Greitens' campaign staff for more information. Parker Briden, a campaign spokesman, said Greitens was referring to television attack ads aired against Greitens right before the primary.

**Campaign finance records**

Briden referred us to Missouri campaign finance reports filed by the Chris Koster campaign detailing contributions from Jobs and Opportunity, a political action committee. Koster won the Democratic primary for governor and will square off against Greitens in the general election in November.

Beginning two weeks before the Aug. 8 primary, the PAC made four "in-kind" contributions — contributions of goods and services and not cash — to Koster for Missouri, Koster's campaign.

The in-kind contributions carried a total valuation of over $1 million, according to the reports filed by the Koster with the Missouri Ethics Commission. The largest contribution was reported as $713,082, made on July 29. The same week, two other contributions were made — one valued at $112,560, and another for $150,080. On Aug. 5, three days before the election, the committee made a final contribution valued at $25,710.82.

After the donations were made, the Greitens campaign issued a press release titled "Koster Caught in Conspiracy to Hijack Republican Primary."

"This is an attempt by national Democrats to steal an election in Missouri through meddling in the Republican primary," the release read.

**Attack ad**

The reported contributions coincided with a series of television ads attacking Greitens that aired in the five days before the primary. A group called Jobs and Opportunity is credited for paying for the ad. A YouTube video of the ad was posted on July 29, about a week before the primary.

According to Koster's campaign finance expenditures, his campaign normally pays between $500,000 and $700,000 for media advertising. No other single campaign expenditure comes close to that amount. That
puts the PAC's contribution in perspective — it's unlikely a $1 million in-kind contribution would buy anything else.

The ad lambastes Greitens for accepting a separate $1 million contribution from Michael Goguen, a California-based tech financier. Goguen is the subject of a pending civil lawsuit with a woman who has accused him of sexual abuse.

"While others returned his money, Greitens says he's honored to take it," the ad's narrator says.

Greitens is right: the Democratic Governors Association is behind money given to his Democratic opponent. The Washington, D.C. address for Jobs and Opportunity that the Koster campaign reported to the Missouri Ethics Commission is also the address for the Democratic Governors Association. A week before the election, Jobs and Opportunity made a $1 million in-kind contribution to Koster, which coincided with a TV ad attacking Greitens.

Although the political action committee is unaffiliated with Koster’s campaign, Koster's campaign had some knowledge of the ad before it aired, since the in-kind contribution was listed on Koster's campaign finance report.

PACs that act independently from a candidate do not have to report contributions to that candidate's campaign, said James Thomas, the campaign treasurer for Catherine Hanaway, who was a Republican gubernatorial candidate in the primary. But when the PAC is in contact with the candidate, related contributions need to be reported.

For example, the PAC could have discussed when the ad's content or when it would be aired with Koster's campaign, Thomas said.

Since Missouri has no limits on campaign contributions, it's okay that the PAC talked to Koster's campaign. It would be a different story if this were a federal election, though, Thomas said. Federal PACs can only contribute $5,000 to a candidate, so Jobs and Opportunity’s $1 million in-kind contribution would be illegal.
On July 31, Greitens released an ad in response to the PAC's ad. In the ad, which has since drawn national attention, Greitens fires rounds of a machine gun into an open field.

"Eric Greitens is under attack from Obama's Democrat machine," the narrator of the ad says. "When he fights back, he brings out the big guns."

After the primary, Greitens said no other Democratic groups launched attack ads against any other Republican gubernatorial candidate, according to the Associated Press.

We also asked Austin Chambers, Greitens' campaign manager, why Greitens repeatedly cited President Barack Obama's involvement in the ad buy.

Chambers said the company the PAC hired to purchase the airtime for the ad is the same Obama has used for his ads. The company, named GMMB, produced ads for Obama during both of his presidential campaigns.

And though Koster's donations were big, they were legal, despite Greitens' press release connoting Koster's involvement in illegal activity.

Koster's campaign directed all questions to the spokesman for the PAC.

Marvin Overby, an MU political science professor, said large donations like the PAC's are common before an election.

"This happens a lot. It's just part of the rough and tumble of politics," he said. "I'm not sure the Greitens' campaign wouldn't have done the same thing."

Our ruling

Greitens said the Democratic Governors Association and "the Obama political machine" spent $1 million against him leading up to the primary election.
A PAC with the same address as the Democratic Governors Association made four in-kind contributions totaling that amount in the weeks leading up to the election.

And though both Obama and the PAC hired the same company to work on their ads, there's no evidence to support Greiten's statement that the "Obama political machine" colluded with the PAC.

We rate this claim as Mostly True.