

Radiation found in basement of MU art museum

7:00 AM, Jun 23, 2011

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - The University of Missouri is asking a federal agency for more time to clean up radiation in a former chemistry building that now houses a museum.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that inspectors removed radioactive material from the basement and attic of Pickard Hall but contamination ago remains in pipes and air ducts. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires such contaminated buildings to be cleaned within two years.

The building on Francis Quadrangle is now home to the Museum of Art and Archaeology and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The university wants the NRC to indefinitely extend its cleanup timeline. The agency scheduled a public hearing Thursday night on campus to discuss that request.



MU investigates missing patient information

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune Published June 21, 2011 at 4:16 p.m.

Updated June 22, 2011 at 11:51 a.m.

University of Missouri police and health care officials are trying to figure out what happened to a box containing copies of patient billing information that has been missing since June 14.

Yesterday, MU Health Care notified 1,288 patients that their financial information might have been compromised as a result.

The university was expecting the package to arrive June 14. When it didn't show up, officials notified the MU Police Department and began identifying those patients whose billing information was included.

A Kansas City bank that receives deposits and processes checks and credit card payments made to various MU Health facilities sent the package, which included copies of payments the bank received June 6 through 13. The package was delivered via a private courier.

MU police Capt. Brian Weimer said the courier — who worked for a company — claimed to have dropped the box off between 5:30 and 6 a.m. at the Quarterdeck Building off LeMone Industrial Boulevard, a building that houses contracts and health care payroll offices. "It wasn't there when people went to get it," Weimer said. "We don't know if it was inadvertently moved or taken."

MU Health security staff members have searched the premises and interviewed employees, spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said. "There's no evidence the package is within our facilities," she said.

Police are now reviewing surveillance from cameras in the area and are determining who might have seen something from swipe cards used at the building that morning, Weimer said.

The health system said in a news release it terminated its contract with the courier. Jenkins said it was a "business decision" and declined to provide more details.

No Social Security numbers were included in the documents, but missing information did include names, addresses, bank account numbers and partial credit card numbers. Affected patients are being advised to contact their bank or credit card companies, place a fraud alert on their credit files and check credit reports.

“Safeguarding the privacy of patient information is our top priority, and to that end, we have taken immediate action steps to investigate the missing information, notify the patients affected and help the patients protect their accounts from identify theft,” Jim Ross, MU Health’s chief executive officer, said in a statement.

Patients wanting more information can go to www.muhealth.org/ProtectedInformation or call Cheryl Hopson at 882-2013 or (800) 877-2372 or Misty Woods at 884-1983 or (800) 877-2372.

Mizzou's Biomedical Engineering Program Earns \$5 Million Grant

By Kelsey Whipple Wed., Jun. 22 2011 at 1:10 PM

Categories: Education

Dr. Jinglu Tan talks about biomedical engineering the way most people would talk about the discovery of an enormous secret fortune. And in some ways, he'd be right.

There's one problem, though. In the past, he says, researchers haven't crossed the boundaries they should: They do the research, but they leave the next step -- the practical application -- to for-profit entrepreneurs.

That's the step he hopes that researchers at Mizzou will take in the future. Thankfully, the school has \$5 million to ensure that they will.

This Tuesday, the University of Missouri announced its most recent funding acquisition, a \$5 million grant agreement with the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation tied specifically to its Translational Partnership Award Program. The idea of translation is key here: The ultimate goal of the research conducted with these funds is to create products or projects that will directly benefit healthcare patients.

The department was selected to apply in October because of its previous success with the foundation, which has granted money to some of its professors. With the help of Bill Caldwell, director of the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, and Chris Fender, director of the MU Office of Technology Management and Industrial Relations, Tan, the chair of Mizzou's biological engineering department, hopes to translate the department's rapid growth in both size and national reputation in the past ten years into projects that will benefit hospital patients while creating a name for the department.

"The goal is twofold: One is that we take medical engineering research to the marketplace," Tan says. "We need to go a step further and take the discoveries toward a direction, such as a procedure, a product or a drug, that directly benefits patients. Our second goal is to contribute economically through new businesses and employment opportunities as a result of that."

At the year's end, the grant committee will meet up and begin soliciting proposals that meet those goals. The projects must be both translational and collaborative -- they must take research to the marketplace and work across disciplines. Through the grant, the university will be awarded \$666,667 from the foundation each of the next five years, while Mizzou matches \$333,333 each year.

"We're proud of the collaborative culture at Mizzou," Tan says. "It's important for us to find a way to commercialize the industry and create immediate applications for our research. Especially in biomedical research, it takes a village."

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1955

MU lands \$5 million grant agreement with the Walter H. Coulter Foundation

Posted to On Campus by Turner Johnson at 5:45 p.m., June 22, 2011

MU officials announced Monday a \$5 million agreement with the Walter H. Coulter Foundation, through the Foundation's Coulter Translational Partnership Award.

"This is a major recognition of the University of Missouri and its researchers as only about 15 universities have been given this award," said Jinglu Tan, James C. Dowell professor and biological engineering chairman in the College of Engineering and the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, in a news release. "This award will position us to become a national leader in translational biomedical research by building on existing successes in biomedical engineering research, cooperation between engineering and medicine researchers, and technology transfer projects."

The award is meant to promote and fund the commercialization of various translational research endeavors across the country, with the end goal always being "to focus on outcomes which will save, extend and improve patient lives suffering from any disease or condition, in any size market, in any discipline, in any country around the world," according to the Coulter Foundation's website.

As an example of what the Foundation is trying to accomplish, the release exhibited the success of biological engineering associate professor John Viator, whose research has led to technology that can detect cancer cells in the bloodstream by utilizing lasers.

"These awards are very important in helping scientists understand the commercialization process," Viator said in the release. "In my case, the award helped us develop the apparatus, define it and make it more accurate. The Coulter Foundation also provided services such as an intellectual property analysis. While one law firm studied the patent landscape regarding the technology, another firm helped us develop a business plan. We also had an opportunity to talk with other scientists who had received the award and go to seminars to learn about business and commercialization issues."

The release stated the Walter H. Coulter Foundation will provide MU with \$666,667 per year for five years, if MU matches with \$333,333 per year for a total of \$5 million. An oversight committee composed of translational research stakeholders will determine which biological engineering professors will be appropriated funds for the commercialization of their research discoveries.

Married men 'feel unhealthier when they retire'... until their wives stop work too and are on hand to look after them

By [Ted Thornhill](#) Last updated at 8:20 AM on 23rd June 2011

Most married men look forward to retirement, with all the gardening and games of golf it'll bring. But a study shows that many actually feel in worse health once they stop working.

But fortunately things do improve: husbands begin to feel healthier when their wives retire too and begin looking after them more carefully, researchers from the University of Missouri discovered.

However, despite their perception of being in worse health after retiring, it is actually all in their heads.

The risk of heart attacks in men actually declined once they began drawing a pension, the study showed. There was, however, no change in women.

The research was presented at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, which has a mission to 'advance the study of ageing and disseminate information among scientists, decision makers, and the general public'.

Lead researcher Assistant Professor Angela Curl, said: 'When wives retire, they may monitor their husbands' health more closely, taking them to the doctor regularly and ensuring they lead a healthy lifestyle.

'Women traditionally put the needs of everyone else before themselves, a behaviour that could put their own health at risk.

'There are a lot of health benefits to staying employed. Working just a few hours each week can facilitate better health.'

Professor Curl added that when it comes to retirement, the key thing is to plan carefully for it.

She added: 'Any time a major life change happens, it is an opportunity for renegotiation of roles within a couple.

'If a couple wants positive changes to occur in retirement, it is important for spouses to be intentional in negotiating and planning for activities that match their ideals, finances and current health status.'

Caring for husband may cut longevity

Published: June 23, 2011 at 1:55 AM

COLUMBIA, Mo., June 23 (UPI) -- The longer men are retired, the worse they rate their health, but they report improved health when their wives retire, U.S. researchers say.

"When wives retire, they may monitor their husbands' health more closely, taking them to the doctor regularly and ensuring they lead a healthy lifestyle," Angela Curl, an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Missouri, says in a statement. "Women traditionally put the needs of everyone else before themselves, a behavior that could put their own health at risk."

Wives rated their health worse during the first few years of retirement, but their ratings improved in the long run. To ease the switch from full-time employment into retirement, Curl recommends a gradual transition to working less and maintaining some level of engagement in the workforce.

"There are a lot of health benefits to staying employed," Curl says. "Working just a few hours each week can facilitate better health."

The findings were presented at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America.

BUSINESS JOURNAL

MU study: Don't disregard negative online comments

Kansas City Business Journal

Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2011, 2:54pm CDT

Companies shouldn't ignore negative comments posted online, particularly from victims of a situation, a new study suggests.

Bo Kyung Kim, a doctoral student in the University of Missouri School of Journalism, found that such comments can propel negative views of an organization in crisis because the public puts so much stock in unsubstantiated information online.

"During crises, organizations need to make an effort to respond to negative online comments from users," Kim said in a written statement. "They can contact the user directly, post a response on the site for all to see, or in extreme cases, remove the comments from the site. In any fashion, organizations need to monitor their online presence closely to prevent the negative perceptions from spiraling out of control."

Kim conducted the study by measuring subjects' baseline views of four auto companies, then asking them to read a news story about a problem each faced and asking the same questions about perceptions of the companies. Then, they were shown negative comments posted on Facebook, Twitter and other websites about the situations and asked the same questions. Comments from victims — no matter what platform — most negatively affected subjects' perceptions.

"Victims have higher credible perceptions for readers, so I would definitely suggest that organizations should pay closer attention to content created by perceived victims of the crisis than content created by an anonymous source," Kim said. "We found that negative messages created by victims significantly increased the negative reputation of an organization and were more likely to result in boycotts against the organization than when it was sourced to unaffected individuals."

Hyunmin Lee, an assistant professor at St. Louis University and former doctoral candidate at MU, is co-author of the study.

Angry online comments about you? Don't ignore them.

It's no secret that social media and online comment sections reveal lots of anger and misinformation.

Pass them off as water under the bridge at your peril.

Academic research by Bokyoung Kim at the University of Missouri finds that "angry user-generated comments," especially by perceived victims of a crisis or corporate problem can have a big effect on others' perceptions.

Kim's findings indicate that organizations should respond, not ignore, the negative postings.

Unfortunately, "the public relies on unsubstantiated web-based information," her research found.

Suggested responses to counter that:

- * Contact the negative poster directly.
- * Post a response to reach the same audience.
- * Remove the comments from the site (if they're in a venue you control).

Powerful, highly sexed, a risk taker: testosterone's link to a downfall

Stephanie Rosenbloom

June 23, 2011

Short-sighted ... Anthony Weiner failed to weigh up the risks inherent in his indiscretions. *Photo: Reuters*

"I DON'T know what I was thinking." So said Anthony Weiner after finally admitting he sent naughty photos of himself to women he met on the internet.

The married former US congressman, who resigned this month, 10 days after a confessional news conference, might not know what he had been thinking but scientists have an idea.

Brain architecture and chemistry was studied long before Weiner pinged photos of his unmentionables into cyberspace. And the research - some of it subject to dispute - suggests physiology played a role in his digital dalliances.

"Most people who get as far as he's gotten are high-testosterone people," says a biological anthropologist at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Helen Fisher. "Along with that ambition comes a high sex drive. Testosterone is linked with both of them."

The curators' professor in psychological sciences at the University of Missouri in Columbia, David Geary, says men - particularly successful men - have "an evolutionary history of polygamy". Men who pursue politics are also pursuing power, Geary says, and "from an evolutionary perspective, the whole goal of men striving for power is to increase their access to sexual opportunities".

But in an era of easily followed digital footprints, the chances of being caught are greater than ever. So why cheat and tweet?

One possible answer: there's a correlation between testosterone and risk taking.

"If you asked one of these guys, 'What are the chances of you getting caught?', you would see an underestimation of the risks and the severity of the consequences," Geary says. "Women, on the other hand, tend to focus on the potential harm of the consequences."

Fisher says women have, on average, more long-range neural connections than most men. As a result, men tend to narrowly focus on the here and now instead of the potential long-term consequences.

Fisher says that when Weiner said "I don't know what I was thinking", "he probably literally was not seeing or evaluating or weighing properly all of the outcomes for this. He was focused on the short term."

But gender generalisations are a dangerous area. Men and women are more alike than different and their neurological differences have historically been used to justify sexism.

Critics also contend that the subject groups of many neurological gender studies are too small or the studies sometimes have other flaws. And it's not always clear how, or if, neurological differences translate into specific behaviour. Our actions are shaped by other factors as well, such as experiences, culture and genetics.

Bianca Acevedo, of the department of psychological and brain sciences at the University of California, says: "For example, individuals who need to exert much control in their daily lives [such as powerful politicians] may have fewer cognitive resources to regulate their behaviour in other life domains."

That said, studies that have nothing to do with gender differences still underscore how powerless males or females can feel in the grip of sexual desire.

Brain areas involving desire are activated in less than 200 milliseconds, according to research by an assistant professor in the psychology department at Syracuse University, Stephanie Ortigue, and Francesco Bianchi-Demicheli, of the University of Geneva.

Even before you realise some detail about a person has caught your eye, your unconscious brain knows that person will activate your reward system and your brain begins to anticipate the reward.

"People have this urge and there's a loss of control," Ortigue says. The urge washes over people in a moment between unconsciousness and consciousness, a moment that Ortigue calls the sexual zone, or S-zone.

"There in the S-zone, at this moment in time, their attention is suddenly focused on that reward," she says, "and everything else suddenly doesn't exist any more." In the S-zone, the future is not a consideration.

Asked whether this myopic euphoria happens with non-sexual stimuli, such as food, Ortigue says yes. But scholars say the decision to act on a desire depends on past positive associations. For instance, after many online interactions with women, Weiner probably discovered that such encounters were guaranteed to deliver pleasure.

Those feelings would have been reinforced by the brain chemical dopamine, which is also triggered by novelty - which, in Weiner's case, may have taken the form of new electronic liaisons.



Spots on Team USA fulfill dreams for Taylor, Thomas

By David Briggs

Columbia Daily Tribune Wednesday, June 22, 2011

They grew up dazzled by visions of gold medals and Olympic glory.

As a superstar cast of softball players on the U.S. national team blistered all comers every four years, Missouri's Chelsea Thomas, Rhea Taylor and thousands of their generation dreamed of someday slipping on the red, white and blue threads.

"It just looked so fun," said Taylor, who was already playing softball when the sport made its Olympics debut in 1996.

The odds seemed incalculable. Team USA, which won three straight Olympic golds and outscored opponents 1,475-24 during a 185-game winning streak from 1996-2008, featured the best players in the world.

But from the day Thomas and Taylor arrived in Columbia, neither tempered their ambition.

"That was one the first comments that each of them made," Missouri Coach Ehren Earleywine said. "It was their dream to play for Team USA."

For both, it is no longer fantasy. Thomas, a rising junior who led the nation with a 0.95 ERA last season, and Taylor, a three-time All-American center fielder who just finished her senior year, were named to the USA Softball women's national team last week. They joined an 18-member roster seeking to defend U.S. titles in three international tournaments this summer and fall.

"I am so happy right now!" Thomas texted Earleywine after learning she made the team.

"There is no better honor than playing for your country," said Earleywine, who played four years on the U.S. national fastpitch softball team. "I'm really happy for these two kids. Very seldom do people on any level get to achieve their dreams. All of us have had dreams growing up, and they kind of get blown away by the wind and you end up doing what you have to do in life. It's a very few select people who are able to live out their dream."

Thomas and Taylor are carrying the U.S. banner in a tenuous time for their sport.

Softball was voted out of the Olympics for at least 2012 and 2016, prompting the U.S. Olympic committee to eliminate funding for the national team. That led to an exodus of stars from international competition. Standouts from the 2008 Games such as Cat Osterman, Jessica Mendoza and Monica Abbott will spend the summer playing National Pro Fastpitch — a four-team league with franchises in Akron, Ohio; Rosemont, Ill.; Kissimmee, Fla.; and Hermitage, Tenn.

This year's Team USA roster will not include any players with Olympic experience — and only three national team veterans. Yet the new look has dimmed neither the team's expectations — a seventh straight Pan American Games title — nor the enthusiasm of Missouri's star pair.

Taylor, who helped lead the Tigers to their third straight College World Series last season, was on a flight from California to her native Georgia when the national team roster was announced Friday morning. She landed to a phone stuffed with 35 text messages and a call from MU assistant Melissa Tucci.

“She said, ‘Don’t you have something to tell me.’ I was like, ‘Are you serious?’ ” Taylor said. “It’s great.”

Taylor and Thomas — one of four pitchers on the roster, along with Baylor's Whitney Canion, Oklahoma's Keilani Ricketts and Michigan's Jordan Taylor — will first represent the U.S. in international competition July 9-17 at the Canadian Open Fast Pitch International Championship in Surrey, B.C. The Pan American Games are in October in Guadalajara, Mexico.