

Mizzou Weekly

April 28, 2011 Volume 32, No. 29

Mutated gene in terrier breed could lead to Parkinson's treatment

GENETIC RESEARCH

Disease's symptoms similar in dogs and humans

The same gene mutation found in Tibetan Terrier dogs can also be found in a fatal human neurological disorder related to Parkinson's disease.

Both humans and animals could benefit from the discovery, say a team of University of Missouri researchers who published the findings in the June 2011 issue of *Neurobiology of Disease*.

The disease in Tibetan Terriers is called adult-onset neuronal ceroid-lipofuscinosis (NCL). Within the dogs' cells in the brain and eye, material that should be "recycled" builds up and interferes with nerve cell function. The buildup causes signs of dementia, impaired visual behavior and loss of coordination in dogs, beginning at around the age of five. The dogs also exhibit unwarranted aggression.

While there are many forms of NCL in humans, the symptoms of are similar in people and dogs. The disease is ultimately fatal for both. The canine genome map and DNA samples from dogs diagnosed with NCL allowed the researchers to pinpoint the specific gene that causes the disease.

The mutation, discovered by Fabiana Farias, doctoral candidate in the Genetics Area Program at the University of Missouri, as part of her thesis research, causes a hereditary form of Parkinson's disease in humans. This suggests that the recycling that goes awry in NCL may also be involved in degenerative diseases like Parkinson's.

Now, DNA from dogs can be tested to identify the presence of the mutated gene, and that test can ensure that Tibetan Terrier breeders do not pass it on to the next generation. The researchers also believe that they may be able to test potential human therapies on the animal population because they can use the DNA test to identify affected dogs before they start to show symptoms.

"Looking through samples collected from hundreds of dogs over many years, we got to the point where we're able to say this is a disease caused by the mutation of one gene," said researcher Martin Katz, professor of veterinary pathobiology. "Finding that gene was like finding a single house in a very large city – but we had the dog family history and the tools to look through the city in a systematic way to locate address of the mutation responsible for the disease."

NCL ultimately took the life of Topper, a Tibetan Terrier owned by Lynn Steinhaus of Columbia. Steinhaus said Topper showed increased shyness around age five, and showed a loss of muscle control later. Topper also suffered seizures before he was euthanized in July of 2009. Topper's DNA was used to further the study.

"This is really hard disease for dog owners to go through," Steinhaus said. "Those seizures are just terrible."

Along with Katz, the research team included Gary Johnson, associate professor of veterinary pathobiology; Dennis O'Brien, a professor in the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery; and researchers from MU's College of Veterinary Medicine; College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; and the Mason Eye Institute.

The publication is the result of almost 10 years of work. The researchers believe it couldn't have occurred without the unique combination of animal and human medical science at MU.

“Dogs and people suffer from the same diseases, and it’s much easier to discover gene issues in dogs because of the unique genetics of purebred dogs,” O’Brien said. “Because we have a medical school and veterinary school near each other, we can find the genes in the dog and then find out if they cause a similar disease in people.”

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MU professor brings closure to Scott case

CORRECTING THE RECORD

New headstone will honor victim of 1923 lynching

Almost 90 years ago, James T. Scott, a prominent African-American, was lynched and buried in an unmarked grave in Columbia Cemetery. Until recently, the only explanation for Scott's death at the hands of an angry mob appeared on his death certificate: a note that said he had "committed rape."

Eight days earlier, on April 21, 1923, Scott had been arrested for the assault of Regina Almstedt, a 14-year-old sophomore at Columbia High School. Although he maintained his innocence, insisting he was working as a janitor on the MU campus at the time of the assault, Scott was charged with the crime and held without bail at the Boone County Courthouse. Before he could be tried, 500 angry men broke into Scott's cell, dragged him to the Stewart Bridge and hung him in front of nearly 2,000 Columbia citizens.

Clyde Ruffin, chair of MU's Department of Theatre, first learned of James Scott when he read an undergraduate thesis by Patrick Huber, now an associate professor of history at Missouri University of Science and Technology. Huber's research included newspaper articles by Charles Nutter, a freshman in the School of Journalism, who had published the names of some of the mob leaders responsible for Scott's lynching in the Columbia Evening Missourian. Ruffin later included Scott's story in an award-winning play he produced called Strands.

But as a professor at MU and a reverend at Second Missionary Baptist Church, where Scott was a member, Ruffin believed he had an obligation to bring Scott's story to the attention of the entire Columbia community. Last year, he organized the James T. Scott Monument Committee to raise money for a proper headstone for Scott's grave.

"I really felt those two roles I strive to fulfill placed me in a unique position to do something to address his life," he said. "Every once in awhile you have a platform to speak for change and justice and it just dawned on me when I was visiting the cemetery one day that I had that platform and I could get it done."

The committee's work will culminate at noon tomorrow, when MU faculty members and Columbia citizens gather for a memorial celebration at Second Missionary Baptist Church. Following the service, a permanent headstone will be dedicated and placed at Scott's gravesite in Columbia Cemetery.

The new marker will read: Erected April 30, 2011 by the citizens of Columbia as a symbol of our commitment to a future in which people of all races will live together in peace and receive the fundamental rights of equal justice under the law.

The ceremonies will include tributes to Nutter; the Rev. Jonathan Lyle Caston, a former pastor at Second Missionary Baptist Church who sought justice for Scott; and Hermann Almstedt, the father of the young girl who was assaulted and who tried to stop the mob's actions that night. Speakers will include MU School of Journalism faculty members, as well as the ancestors of Columbia residents who were involved in the events that transpired on the day of Scott's death. There will also be performances by the Second Baptist Combined Choirs and Hazelwood Central High School Marching Band.

Shortly after Scott's death, Ruby Hulen, the Boone County prosecutor, filed charges against five men, including former Columbia City Councilman George Barkwell, who was charged with murder. Despite the testimony of Nutter, who witnessed the lynching, Barkwell was acquitted. No one else was ever tried.

But Scott received a bit of justice last fall, when Columbia resident and independent filmmaker Scott Wilson teamed up with the Missouri Department of Health and Bureau of Vital Records to remove the words "committed rape" from Scott's death certificate.

Those words are now crossed out on the document, replaced with “never tried or convicted of rape.” The document, which is in the Missouri State Archives, records Scott’s cause of death as “Asphyxia due to hanging by lynching by assailants.”

Ruffin said he believes the monument dedication will bring more closure to Scott’s life and put the conflict surrounding his death in its proper light.

“We found that there were some really deep feelings regarding this event deeply seeded in this community,” he said. “Visiting this lynching openly and publicly without the subject of guilt or blame and just acknowledging that it happened will help pursue equality and justice for everybody and the monument will serve as a permanent reminder of that.”

— *Kelly Nelson*

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Compassion in purple



PURPLE DRESS PROJECT Throughout April, Ashley Hasty, a doctoral candidate in Textile and Apparel Management, has worn the same purple dress to raise money for Crohn's disease research. Hasty, who was diagnosed with the disease last year, posts a photo of herself in the dress along with information about Crohn's disease on her blog, [AHastyLife.com](http://www.ahastylife.com).

RAISING AWARENESS

Student blends interests to explain Crohn's disease

Ashley Hasty had never heard of Crohn's disease when she was diagnosed last spring, and she felt alone in her struggle. Six hospital trips and a surgery later, she is now in remission and working hard to get the word out about the disease through her Purple Dress Project.

Each day of April, Hasty, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Textile and Apparel Management, will wear the same purple dress, which was designed by her friend Janna Merciel, a graduate of Stephens College. Daily, Hasty posts a photo of herself in the same dress paired with different accessories along with information about Crohn's disease on her blog, [A Hasty Life](http://www.ahastylife.com) (<http://www.ahastylife.com>). Hasty combined her hobbies to come up with the idea.

"I already have a fashion background, and I've had a blog for awhile, so I wanted to combine my passions for blogging, social

media and fashion all in one to raise awareness about Crohn's," she says.

Crohn's disease is an incurable condition in which a person's immune system attacks the colon. Hasty says she created the project to raise money for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA).

Because the condition's symptoms often affect bowel movements, Hasty decided to go for a more "stylish" approach to the project.

"The disease and symptoms are often embarrassing for people who have it, so I wanted to bring a glamorous touch to the project," she says. "I chose a purple dress because it's a pretty color but is also the color of the ribbon for Crohn's disease."

As of mid-April, Hasty had already raised \$1,280 of her \$5,000 goal. The money she raises will go directly to research about Crohn's and colitis. However, she says her main objective is to increase awareness about the relatively unknown disease and understanding of patients battling Crohn's.

"My main goal is to tell people about the disease and how awful it is so they can help others and be more understanding of people who have it," she says. "I have already received emails from more people than I can count who have Crohn's disease telling me their stories and thanking me for getting the word out there, so I already feel like it's been a success."

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Mizzou Alumni Association honors 2011 distinguished faculty, alumnus

Faculty-Alumni Awards, begun in 1968 by the Mizzou Alumni Association, recognize the achievements of faculty and alumni.

Assistant, associate and full professors are considered for their work as teachers, researchers and administrators. Alumni are considered for both their accomplishments in professional life and service to their alma mater.

The 2011 award winners are:

Distinguished Service Award

- Edwin Turner, BS Ag '62, of Chillicothe, Mo.

Distinguished Faculty Award

- Betty Winfield, Curators' Professor of Journalism

Alumni Awards

- Carl Dicapo, BS Ag '91, of Kansas City
- S. Leslie Flegel, AB '59, of Bonita Springs, Fla.
- Donald Flora, BS IE '66, MS '68, MS '71, of Kansas City.
- Thomas Lafferre, BS ME '56, of Brentwood Tenn.
- Rosemary Porter, PhD '83, of Columbia, retired dean of the Sinclair School of Nursing.
- Ronald Powers, BJ '63, of Castleton, Vt.
- James Sterling, BJ '65, of Columbia, professor and chair of Missouri Community Newspaper Management.

Faculty Awards

- Joseph Hobbs, professor and chair of geography
- Jean Ispa, professor and co-chair of human development and family studies
- Richard Oliver, BS MT '71, M Ed '73 PhD '77, dean of health professions
- James Spain, interim vice provost of Mizzou Online, associate professor of dairy science
- Steven Watts, AB '75, PhD '84, professor of history.

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Meet the Kempers: Bethany Stone



Assistant Teaching Professor of Biological Sciences

Bethany Stone's undergraduate teaching interests include introducing nonscience majors to science in general and biology specifically.

Her goals are for students to know the facts about the issues discussed and to be able to defend their position using research-based information. She wants to equip students with the skills to research science-related topics. "I would like students leaving my class to understand the importance of issues such as global climate change, antibiotic-resistant superbugs and biotic diversity," she says. "I want students to find these topics important enough to go home and share what they have learned with their family and friends."

Students note that they entered her course hating science and left it loving biology. "It was awesome to have a teacher who was passionate and excited to teach the subject," one student says.

Stone is able to emphasize to students interested in biology how the subject might play a role in their lives and how their career choice might include a biology emphasis.

As the job market tightens, future employers look for potential assistant professors to demonstrate experience and proficiency in more than research. They are expected to be experienced in grant writing, people and money management, and teaching. Stone

has participated in the division's Teaching Intern Program, which gives graduate students an opportunity to work with faculty members.

"Bethany is quite simply the kind of teacher that we all want to be and that every student dreams of having at least once in his or her career," one colleague says.

In 2007, Stone received a Provost Outstanding Junior Faculty Teaching Award.

She received a bachelor's degree in biological science in 1996 from Missouri State University and a doctorate in 2001 from MU.

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Meet the Kempers: Etti Naveh-Benjamin



Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychological Sciences

Etti Naveh-Benjamin's message to students is clear: "Care about people, understand their struggles and their stories, and you will live a richer life."

For almost nine years, she has taught diversity-related courses in German and Russian studies and in psychological sciences. The classes are interactive and center on open, brave dialogue as students explore issues such as race, social class, sexual orientation and gender identity, language and ethnicity.

Creating a safe space in which every member is valued can make a difference, she says. "I encourage students to speak to people from other cultures and to immerse themselves in experiences that will take them out of their comfort zone and will teach them what it means to be different and to be treated differently on a daily basis."

Naveh-Benjamin's students write personal journals and papers in which they reflect on their progression. "I hope that through my teaching and advising, students will be aware of their own strength and potential as learners, thinkers and advocates for the less privileged," she says.

Students say that Naveh-Benjamin's classes are some of their most important learning experiences. "I feel that after the course, I am a better person and the world is a better place," one student says.

Naveh-Benjamin is director of the MU Multicultural Certificate, a personalized course of study that serves more than 650 students campuswide. Students earn the certificate along with their undergraduate degree upon completion of certificate requirements.

Naveh-Benjamin has received the Purple Chalk Teaching Award, Robert S. Daniel Excellence in Teaching Award and Excellence in Education Award.

She received a bachelor's degree in 1980 and a master's degree in 1981 from Eastern Michigan University.

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Meet the Kempers: Mike McKean



Associate Professor of Journalism

During his 25 years at MU, Mike McKean's responsibilities have changed, from teaching radio reporting and writing at KBIA-FM to serving as chair of broadcast news. He was chair of convergence journalism, a program he founded six years ago that prepares students to work across media platforms. "I know we've made a difference when our graduates, despite a terrible job market, start their multimedia careers at companies such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, PBS and AOL," he says.

McKean created the undergraduate capstone class in convergence journalism in which students do semester-long collaborative projects. Currently, he serves as director of the Futures Lab at the Reynolds Journalism Institute, where students work with media and technology leaders.

McKean has created real-world opportunities such as competitions in which students design applications for industry-leading corporate partners, including Apple, Adobe, Google and the Hearst Corp. He pushes students to succeed and play a part in the transformation of media.

Since 2009 he has co-taught a class housed in engineering. iPhone and iPad applications developed in class brought national attention to the university and was lauded as an example of the kind of entrepreneurial skills students need in the 21st century.

In 2009 he received an award from Campus Technology Magazine for creating an interdisciplinary innovation fund that provides seed money to student-centered groups on campus to support real-world partnerships. Other awards include the O.O. McIntyre Award, an Excellence in Teaching with Technology Award and a Faculty-Alumni Award.

McKean received a bachelor of journalism degree in 1979 from MU and a master of arts degree in political science in 1985 from Rice University.

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Meet the Kempers: Deborah Hanuscin



Associate Professor of Education and Physics

Through her teaching and research, Deborah Hanuscin wants to promote a better understanding of science among students as well as have them cultivate an appreciation of science as a vital part of their daily lives. “By focusing on authentic tasks related to real-world contexts and practical applications, instructors can foster both active engagement and meaningful learning,” she says. “In this manner, students can do more than simply plug and chug their way through course material. They can learn to consider issues, not just facts, and use their scientific knowledge to think critically about these issues in their daily decision making.”

Her teaching impacts three groups: prospective and practicing K-12 teachers, doctoral students in science education, and faculty and graduate students in the sciences.

Hanuscin believes it is important to engage the prospective and practicing teachers in critically analyzing their own views and images of science and to challenge their ideas with firsthand experiences and interaction with the science community. Her students attend lectures and seminars, explore current advances and controversies in science, and engage in investigations that have direct relevance to their daily decision making. She encourages students to participate in professional organizations and to take part in new experiences that stimulate their professional development.

At MU since 2004, Hanuscin has received several teaching awards, including the Provost’s Outstanding Junior Faculty Teaching Award, the College of Education’s Outstanding Undergraduate Instructor of the Year Award and the Bess Schooling

Professorship in Elementary Education for Excellence in Teaching.

She received a bachelor's degree in 1995 from Florida State University–Tallahassee and both a master's degree in 2001 and a doctorate in 2004 from Indiana University–Bloomington.

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Meet the Kempers: Elizabeth Chang



Assistant Professor of English

In her British of the 19th Century classes, Elizabeth Chang illuminates Victorian literature and culture in all of its facets, from children's literature to vampires. Chang, who joined MU's faculty in 2004, is respected by students and colleagues alike for her ability to ask questions that motivate them to embark on their own process of discovery.

By asking how and why at the right times, Chang turns conventional views about the Victorians' imperial tendencies or their sexual repressiveness from clichés into prompts for exploring issues and problems inherited by society. One student says, "She asks her students to view the larger issues and how they affect society, gender or other topics."

Chang says that when students have difficulty responding to works that pose aesthetic and philosophical questions, she has solutions. "We cannot understand what authors were writing about unless we also understand what they were looking at," she says. "This goes for art as well as for texts in their original form."

She uses handouts, mini lectures, supplemental materials from peer-reviewed Internet sites and review sessions to aid in student learning. "All of these will only advance the cause if an initial connection to the material has already been made," she says. "No connection can occur unless students are known as whole people, respected for their maturity, credited for their capacities, forgiven for their gaffes and expected to grant these honors to their professor and to their peers."

She received a bachelor of arts degree, magna cum laude with honors in English and Chinese literatures in 1995 from Yale University and a doctorate in English in 2004 from the University of California–Berkeley.

Chang is the author of *Britain's Chinese Eye: Literature, Empire and Aesthetics in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*, published in 2010 by Stanford University Press.

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Deaton to serve on federal board

President Barack Obama has announced plans to appoint MU Chancellor Brady J. Deaton as chairman of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD).

Created in 1975, BIFAD advises the U.S. Agency for International Development on agricultural development priorities and issues. There are seven members, at least four of whom must be from the U.S. university community, who typically meet at least three times a year. Deaton will continue in his role as chancellor at MU while serving as chair of BIFAD.

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MU's sustainability efforts celebrated

"Mizzou is known for a lot of things: great Division-I athletic teams, one of the nation's largest Greek systems, not to mention fantastic academics. But now it's known for something else: being a sustainability rock star."

That's according to the recently released Princeton Review Guide to 311 Green Colleges, which profiles the nation's most eco-friendly campuses. Based on surveys of school administrators, the guide features statistics on sustainability, information about environmental majors, green job placement, transportation alternatives and more.

Among the facts noted about MU:

- More than 100 tons of recyclables have been collected at home football games over the last six years.
- Energy conservation saves the campus 20 percent of energy costs, with an ongoing goal to save an additional 1 percent each year.
- A 100 percent biomass boiler at the MU Power Plant will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 25 percent.

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Mizzou Weekly

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“Pets in Peace” Rally

To kick off national “Be Kind to Animals Week,” the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction (ReCHAI) at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine and the Central Missouri Humane Society will host a celebration at 1:30 p.m. May 1 in Peace Park.

Bring your well-behaved, socialized and leashed or held pets for a one-hour rally to honor the love and friendship our companion animals have brought into our lives. A proclamation from Columbia’s Mayor Bob McDavid will be read at 2 p.m.

The College of Veterinary Medicine’s Shelter Club will offer free pet nail trimming. There will also be live music and a prize for the most senior pet.

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