



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Urology

DEPARTMENT OF

# UROLOGY NEWS

Volume 4 | SPRING 2020

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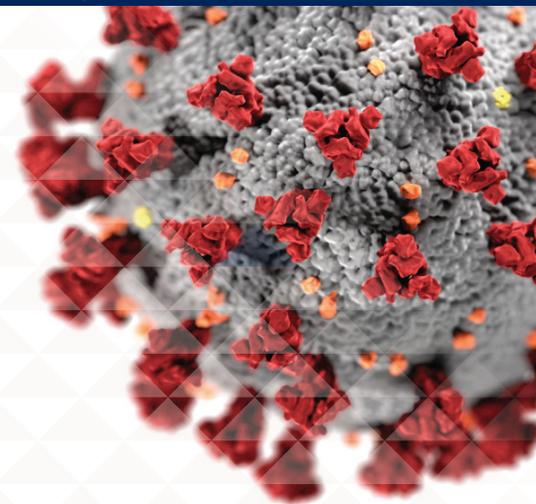
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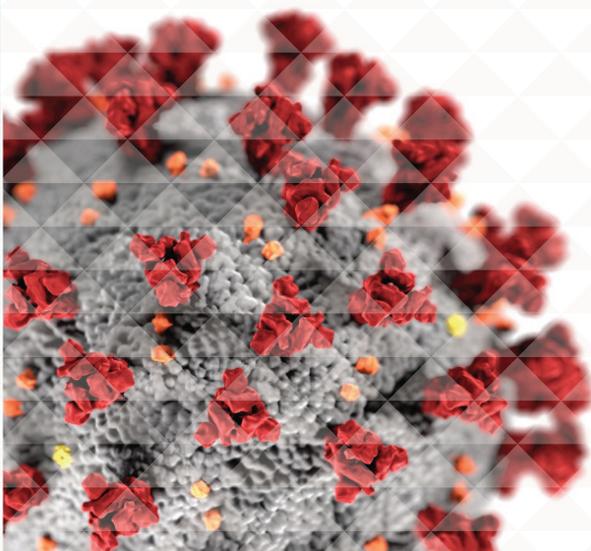
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# ADAPTABILITY, SOCIAL DISTANCING AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT



Banner  
University Medicine



Deb Jur, NP

## Our Newest Nurse Practitioner

Banner – University Medical Center Tucson welcomes Deb Jur, FNP to the Urology clinic at 3838 N Campbell Ave. Deb has been enthusiastically providing nursing care for her entire career, and has been an NP specializing in urology for over 10 years. In addition to her extensive experience, she is also Nationally Certified in Urology through the Society of Urological Nurses (SUNA).

Deb has a broad general urology experience in male and female urologic conditions and also has a special interest in female pelvic medicine including urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, pelvic / bladder pain and urinary tract infections. Previously, she has also served as an investigator in overactive bladder research.

An important aspect of her practice philosophy is taking the time to ensure her patients have a thorough understanding of their urologic conditions and treatment plan. She stays very active in her spare time which includes travel, handball, hiking, and yoga. It is a pleasure to welcome her to the Department of Urology at Banner – University Medical Center Tucson.



Dr. George W. Drach, Dr. Benjamin R Lee, Dean Michael Abecassis at the Investiture Ceremony for the 1st Endowed Chair of Urology



Benjamin R. Lee, MD

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

In March 2020, our lives were transformed by the COVID 19 pandemic. Social distancing became the new norm, Grand Rounds went on-line with Zoom, with a video education format for our lectures: GU Tumor Board, AUA University Conferences, Journal clubs and Indications conferences. There has been an unprecedented synthesis of rapid reactions, decision making, reallocation of resources, punctuated by moments of re-evaluation and ultimately assessments for the greater good.

Our outpatient clinics integrated TeleMedicine visits to keep in touch with our patients at home, maintaining social distancing to keep everyone safe.

Ultimately, COVID 19 has touched both our personal and professional lives to respond to one of the most challenging global health challenges in our lifetime. I would like to thank our physicians, nurses, residents, APPs, medical assistants and administrators for their willingness to be adaptable in this time of

change. At the University of Arizona College of Medicine, there have been several notable responses to the pandemic – Personal protective equipment drives led by faculty & nurses for N95 masks, personal mask construction and procurement of PPE. There have been groups creating COVID 19 specimen collection kits, Researchers focusing on development of COVID 19 antibody testing, creation of safety and prevention training videos for COVID 19 first responders, as well as Virtual Telemedicine training for rural healthcare providers.

On February 19, 2020, the inaugural “George Drach Endowed Chair of Urology” Investiture Ceremony was held, with Dr. Drach serving as extoller, and hosted by Dean Michael Abecassis. It is humbling to be named as recipient, and be associated with its namesake. The George Drach Endowed Chair will go a long way towards achieving stability and growth in the Department of Urology. Thank you to all who have

contributed to the endowment. One of the first areas to support will be research championed by Ken Batai, PhD, who has been a beacon of research for the Department Dr. Batai is working on racial disparities in renal cell carcinoma in Native Americans as well as Hispanic Americans, to better understand why kidney cancer has a higher incidence at a younger age in these populations, as well as understand why the mortality rate is higher.

It has been an amazing year of growth and stability for the Department of Urology. Thank you again to all who have supported us.

**Benjamin R. Lee, MD**  
*The George Drach Endowed Chair of Urology*  
*Professor,*  
*Department of Urology*  
*University of Arizona College of Medicine*

# GREEN VALLEY UROLOGY CLINIC

The University of Arizona Department of Urology is committed to serving the patients of Southern Arizona and has expanded with a satellite clinic in Green Valley.

On September 5, 2018, the Banner – University Medicine Green Valley Clinic expanded from Primary Care and Cardiology services to include seeing patients with Urologic disease. Since then the Green Valley Urology Clinic has seen steady growth and provided Urologic care for local residents in the region.

Patients are seen for a variety of Urologic conditions including enlarged

prostates, Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia, prostate cancer screening, kidney and bladder stones, bothersome urinary symptoms and recurrent urinary tract infections. Dedicated to providing comprehensive, compassionate Urologic care, the clinic is staffed by both Dr. David T. Tzou and Alison Grabowski, NP.

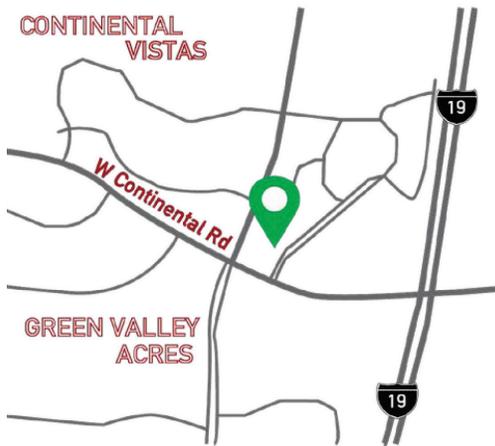
For appointments, please call (520) 694-4032.



Dr. David T. Tzou



Alison Grabowski, NP



## BANNER – UNIVERSITY MEDICINE GREEN VALLEY CLINIC

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# Urology Research 2020

**Ken Batai, PhD and Benjamin Lee, MD,** are investigating genetic and biologic risk factors of early-onset kidney cancer. Renal Cell Carcinoma incidence rates have increased over the past several decades, together with early-onset incidence rates rising more rapidly than other cancer types. Further investigation into whether genes involved in carbohydrate or lipid metabolisms, are expressed differently in tumors from early-onset cases compared to late-onset cases. Drs. Batai and Lee also have started a study to better understand kidney cancer surgical disparities, as Native Americans and Hispanic Americans have higher kidney cancer mortality rates compared to non-Hispanic Whites. Their study will identify differences in treatment patterns that may explain disparities in mortality rates.

**Juan Chipollini, MD,** studies urinary microbiome characteristics in bladder cancer patients. He published his work in *Urologic Oncology* demonstrating enrichment of different taxa of the microbiome based on case-control status, risk groups, and stage. Dr. Chipollini plans to expand this research by including more patients undergoing cystectomy to understand how urinary microbes can play a role in bladder carcinogenesis and therapeutic response.

**Joel Funk, MD,** published work in *Urology*® demonstrating same day outpatient surgery for holmium laser enucleation of the prostate (HoLEP) is safe and outcomes are solid. Even with shorter

*Continued on page 5*

## WELCOME:

We would like to congratulate and extend a warm welcome to our incoming PGY-1 residents for the 2020-2021 academic year.



Dr. Jonathan Seaman

Dr. Jonathan Seaman comes from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine and is a graduate of Colorado State University where he double majored in microbiology and chemistry. He already has several peer-reviewed publications in the field of urology. He is a native of Colorado and in his spare time enjoys rock climbing, singing and playing the violin.



Dr. Namita Lopes

Dr. Namita (“Natalie”) Lopes obtained her MD from the Central Michigan University College of Medicine and obtained her undergraduate degree in Biochemistry from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Natalie is a Michigan native and also has several peer-reviewed publications. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, reading and soccer.

# RETROPERITONEAL LYMPH NODE DISSECTION SURGERY

We have seen a substantial growth in the urologic oncology section of the Department in both clinical and academic arenas. Our robotic cystectomy program continues to grow and our clinical trial team is very active in screening and enrolling patients into many of our clinical studies at our NCI-designated cancer center. Research efforts have also been prolific with many peer-reviewed publications during the current academic year featuring the growth of

the Department as a beacon of academic urology serving the state of Arizona.

We continue to manage a high volume of complex cases such as the one highlighted below demonstrating an advanced germ cell tumor involving the vena cava and aorta. The patient underwent a Retroperitoneal Lymph Node Dissection (RPLND) achieving in excellent local control and optimal postoperative outcomes with negative margins. At the

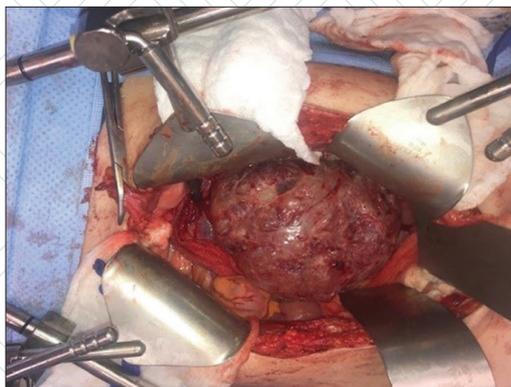
University Of Arizona, we work together together with a multidisciplinary team to mitigate barriers to healthcare that are unique to our state, which may pose difficult challenges to those needing tertiary-level care.

Access to surgical care is a big priority for the healthcare system, and we continually add resources to increase access while maintaining high-level quality of care. We are actively developing our telemedicine



Dr. Juan Chipollini

program to improve patient access to the healthcare system and increase opportunities for multi-disciplinary care and collaboration throughout the state.



15cm post-chemotherapy retroperitoneal tumor in a patient with (left) metastatic testicular cancer showing (center) complete resection with clear surgical margins. (right) Post RPLND demonstrating skeletonization of the Inferior Vena Cava, Aorta and renal vasculature.

## Ava Wong, Research Coordinator

University of Arizona, Department of Urology welcomes Ava Wong as our Clinical Research Coordinator. Ava joins our team from her previous appointment as



Ava Wong

Program Coordinator -Data Analyst with the Pima County Health Department. She is a University of Arizona alumni having earned her MPH, BS, BSHS and is a Certified Health Education Specialist. Ava has been a tremendous help in coordinating consents for the IRB, assisting with Clinical trials, and directing RedCap database management.



Employee entrance at Banner – University Medical Center Tucson

*Continued from page 3*

hospital stays, the readmission rate and complication rate were comparable to the rates reported in the peer reviewed literature.

**Matthew Gretzer, MD**, is developing a novel method to identify the presence of urethral obstruction utilizing a non-invasive method. Through fluid dynamics and morphological changes of the voided stream, he hopes to identify criteria that may be used to indicate the presence of obstruction within the urethra. Additional projects are investigating the practice of early urethral realignment and effect on stricture incidence, need for repeat surgery and post-operative complications compared to staged urethroplasty.

**Christian Twiss, MD**, is examining outcomes of surgery for female pelvic floor disorders, including treatments for incontinence, vaginal prolapse, and vaginal mesh removal. He published in *Urology*<sup>®</sup> demonstrating autologous anterior and apical pelvic organ prolapse (POP) repair using autologous fascia lata is an efficacious treatment for patients desiring non-mesh POP repair with intermediate outcomes.

**David T. Tzou, MD**, studies calculous disease and the correlation of endotoxin levels with kidney stone patients' treatment outcomes. Dr. Tzou and his team have also developed a ultrasound-guided percutaneous nephrolithotomy (PCNL) model that has been found to provide an affordable high-fidelity solution for training urologists in ultrasound guided-PCNL.



Pictured (left to right): Patrick Evans MD (PGY-2), Chris Lopez RN, Maria Iturralde ST, Norma Mariscal CRNA, Cameron Hinkel MD (PGY-3), Joel Funk MD

## BUMC-Tucson Welcomes Third Robotic System

It has been an exciting year in the operating rooms at Banner – University Medical Center Tucson! Not only was there the excitement of moving into 20 brand new operating theaters in April of 2019, including new cystoscopic capabilities, video intraroom transmission, and two additional shelled out ORs to bring the total to 22, we recently welcomed a new team member to these spaces.

In early February 2020, BUMCT added a 3rd DaVinci Xi robotic system increasing the total robotic availability. Dr. Joel Funk and the Urology team christened the new system by performing a Robot-Assisted Sacrocolpopexy on February 7th, 2020 as the systems' inaugural case. The new addition of this robot will allow additional advanced robotic reconstructive techniques, as well as allowing oncology and female urology case availability to increase as well. Moreover, the new Xi system allows for integrated table movement once the robot is docked, minimizing the need to dock and un-dock the system for bilateral renal surgery or complex retroperitoneal surgery for testis cancer.

“...the average number of robotic cases expects to exceed **200 robotic procedures** in the upcoming year.”

With this increased capacity, the average number of robotic cases expects to exceed 200 robotic procedures in the upcoming year. New techniques utilizing the robotic platform for bladder diverticulectomy, robotic bladder augmentation and ureteral reconstruction utilizing buccal mucosa are on the horizon. Finally, 2019 marked an auspicious year for our urologic-oncology program, with the first of several robotic-assisted cystoprostatectomy for muscle-invasive bladder cancer being offered.



Dr. Sunchin Kim

## Welcome Back Dr. Sunchin Kim!

The University of Arizona Department of Urology and Banner – University Medical Center Tucson is excited to announce that Dr. Sunchin Kim will be joining the Department of Urology Faculty. Dr. Kim completed his General Surgery Internship and Urology Residency at The University of Arizona and will have completed a Genitourinary Reconstruction Fellowship at The University of California, San Diego, CA (UCSD).

Dr. Kim has a variety of clinical interests both in General Urology as well as upper tract reconstruction, in robotic, endoscopic and open approaches.

Please join us in welcoming back Dr. Kim!

# UROLOGY HITS A HOLE IN ONE WITH THEIR FIRST PROSTATE CANCER GOLF BENEFIT

The University of Arizona, Department of Urology hosted the 1st Benefit in the *Fight Against Prostate Cancer Golf Tournament*, November 9th at Casino Del Sol's Sewailo Golf Club. We came together to honor cancer survivors, raise awareness about prostate cancer research, and focused efforts to be on the cutting edge of research, education and state of the art treatments for our patients. Our goal was to provide a beautiful venue for cancer survivors and those who support them. November is the month of thankfulness and awareness, and also Prostate Cancer Awareness month.

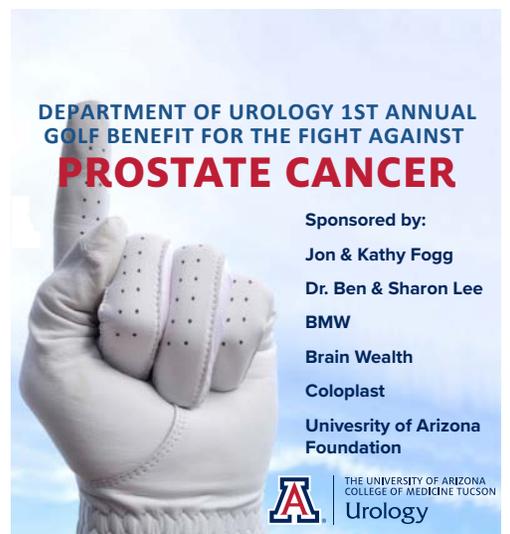
It was a beautiful day for golf. During the lunch hour following golf, Dr. Benjamin Lee, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Urology, gave an introduction and talk about our new department. Dr. Roger Nellans spoke on PSA screening and risk factors for prostate cancer. A grateful patient shared his personal experience with Robotic Nerve Sparing Radical Prostatectomy, with preservation of bilateral neurovascular bundles, and Kendra Marr MD/PhD Candidate, gave an amazing summary of ongoing research in the Arizona Cancer Center focused on understanding the cellular and molecular events that drive prostate cancer progression so that

clinicians can better predict how each individual's tumor will behave.

Following lunch, our Organizing Committee held a silent auction, which was a great success and prizes were awarded to our golf 4-some winners.

Thank you to our players, sponsors, volunteers and organizing committee. Our inaugural event was quite successful in raising funds for prostate cancer research. Our goals were achieved and a fun time was had by all.

We hope to make this an annual event and hope to see many of you join us next year.



Pictured (left to right): Benjamin Lee MD, Felice Serrano, Zullie Portugal, Cara Whittingham, Sheila Cabral, Belen Alcazar, Natalie Payne, Banesa Pineda, Roger Nellans MD.

# Reconstructive Urology Visiting Professor



## DR. HUNTER WESSELLS

Dr. Hunter Wessells, Chair, University of Washington, with the Faculty and Residents of the University of Arizona College of Medicine.

Dr. Hunter Wessells, Professor and Nelson Chair of the Department of Urology at the University of Washington School of Medicine was the George Drach Visiting Professor on March 3-4, 2020. Dr. Wessells specializes in genitourinary trauma, reconstructive surgery and erectile dysfunction. We welcomed back many of our alumni for the Visiting Professor lectureship, held in the new Health Science Innovations Building on campus. Dr. Wessells gave two lectures,

one on Urological Complications of Type 1 Diabetes, and then followed up with a talk on Genetics of Erectile Dysfunction: From Bench to Bedside and Back Again.

The residents, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Gretzer, Associate Professor of Urology, and Dr. Christian Twiss, Residency Program Director, put together several challenging case presentations including ureteral injury, calciphylaxis, bulbar urethral stricture, rectal injury and complications of penile prosthesis to challenge the

visiting professor. The audience was truly impressed with the depth and breadth of his reconstructive urologic knowledge. Our visiting professor for April 13-14, 2021 will be Kathleen Kobashi, MD, FACS, FPMRS, Head of the Section of Urology and Renal Transplantation at Virginia Mason Medical Center, Director of the Pelvic Floor Center and Clinical Fellowship in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS). We look forward to seeing you there!

## GU Reconstruction and Trauma Update

The section of GU Reconstruction, Department of Urology remains vibrant with continued treatment of complex cases. We owe gratitude to our local and regional urologists for their kind referrals. As we enter the 16<sup>th</sup> year of our reconstruction program, we are approaching 900 urethral cases. We continue to investigate novel ways to follow these men after repair to monitor outcomes, and are actively following with our IRB approved protocol to evaluate fluid

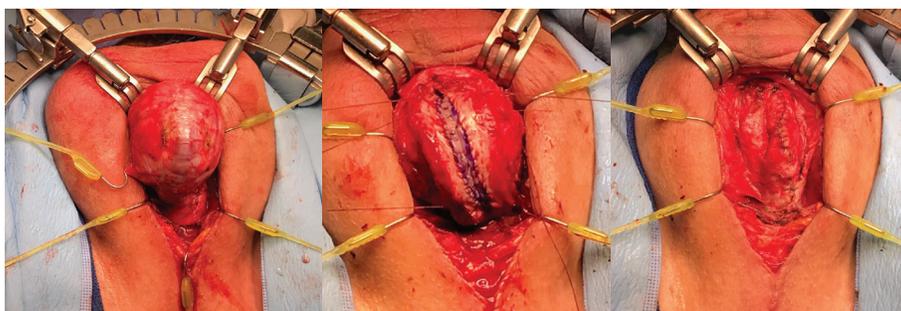
dynamics of voiding following urethroplasty. The last year was a robust year (If there's room can add table, if not, surgical images better as single figure) with a variety of reconstruction and prosthetic cases. The attached figures demonstrate one of the unique complex cases consistently being performed. As described by Kulkarni, we are performing penile urethral reconstruction cases via a perineal incision (left) with inversion of the penis

and subsequent dorsal urethral buccal mucosa inlay (middle). Final outcomes (right) demonstrate appropriate durability with reoperation/procedures

rates < 8% at 3 years. The approach to this repair minimizes risk of fistula, and also better tolerated by patients with minimal impact on penile healing and cosmesis.



Dr. Matthew Gretzer



Pictured (left to right): Penis inverted via perineal incision, Ventral urethrotomy with dorsal inlay of buccal graft, Urethrotomy closed and penis reposition.



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### THREE CONVENIENT LOCATIONS



**Banner – University Medicine  
North Campus**

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Urology Clinic "G", 3rd Floor  
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**Banner – University Medical Center  
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**Banner - University Medicine  
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