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News Release

USU guest speaker gives speech on peptic ulcer disease and cancer

BETHESDA, Md. – Faculty and students at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences learned about how a certain bacteria is a risk factor for peptic ulcer disease and gastric cancer Jan. 12.

Guest speaker, Timothy L. Cover, MD, described how a bacteria known as helicobacter pylori colonize the gastric mucosa and cause gastric inflammation during his presentation entitled “Helicobacter pylori Virulence Factors, Peptic Ulcer Disease and Cancer.” Cover is an assistant professor of infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tenn.

“We’re interested in the bacteria helicobacter pylori, which is found in humans throughout the world, because infection from these organisms is a strong risk factor for developing ulcer disease and gastric cancer,” said Cover. “So, we’re particularly interested in what the molecular mechanisms are that lead to the development of gastric cancer or peptic ulcer disease or peptic ulcer disease in patients who have this infection.”

“By understanding the mechanisms we hope, eventually, it will lead to better treatments of helicobacter-associated diseases. Gastric Cancer is a huge problem and is the second cause of cancer-related deaths throughout the world. Not only do we want to prevent gastric cancer, but we want to understand more about the processes that lead to it. And if we better understand those processes, I think that we will be able to begin to prevent diseases,” said Cover.

A native of Lebanon, Pa., Cover earned his bachelor’s degree in biology in 1980 from Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa. In 1984, he received his medical degree from Duke University School of

Medicine, Durham, N.C. He received two fellowships in infectious diseases – one at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver, Colo., in 1987, and the other from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in 1989. In 1990, he became an instructor of medicine at Vanderbilt, and currently serves there as an assistant professor.

USU was established by Congress under the Department of Defense in 1972 and has the nation's only fully accredited federal school of medicine and graduate school of nursing. With its motto "Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way," the university has a worldwide reputation as a center of excellence for military medical education and research.