25 Years of Teaching, Healing and Discovery

College of Medicine ? Tucson
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As the UA Steele Children's Research Center [1] celebrates its 25-year anniversary, there is one faculty member who has been with the center since its opening in 1992: beloved pediatric intensivist and professor Andreas Theodorou, M.D.

Known for his friendly, down-to-earth demeanor and copious coffee consumption, Theodorou ? or "Dr. Andy" to use the name his young patients prefer ? has been a steadfast presence and positive influence to many over the years.

"Dr. Theodorou perfectly exemplifies our mission to teach, to heal and to discover," said Steele Center Director Fayez K. Ghishan, M.D. "He has, and continues to excel, in all three of these areas. He is an amazing pediatric critical care physician, an outstanding educator and a world-class clinical researcher."

"The support I've received ? both from the infrastructure and the faculty ? allowed a 'clinician-scholar' like me to contribute in a scientific way that I otherwise might not have," Theodorou said. "My mentor over the years has been Dr. Ghishan. He drives and inspires the faculty to excellence in clinical care, teaching and research."

While reflecting specifically upon his research contributions, two studies stand out for Theodorou.

First, the landmark scorpion antivenom research he worked on with Leslie Boyer, M.D., who now leads the UA's Venom Immunochemistry, Pharmacology and Emergency Response ? or VIPER [2] ? Institute. They worked for 12 years to develop antivenom for scorpion stings. Their study was published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine.

"Our hard work paid off, and in August of 2011, we were thrilled to be notified that it became the first-ever FDA-approved scorpion antivenom," he said.

The second project was a national, multicenter study that aimed to determine if the use of hypothermia ? body cooling ? improved survival with good neurobehavioral outcomes in children who suffered cardiac arrest.

Theodorou was one of the principal investigators for the study at the Steele Center/Banner Children's at Diamond Children's Medical Center. The Steele Children's Research Center is a Center of Excellence within the UA College of Medicine ? Tucson.

Although previous studies indicated it was effective for adults, the four-year clinical research project involving children showed that hypothermia did not improve outcomes. The findings appeared in the New England Journal of Medicine.

"Everyone was trying to use hypothermia, without knowing if it would make a difference for
children," he explained. "This highlights the fact that if you have a question regarding the best medical care of children, you can't always answer the question by studying adults."

Looking back to when he arrived 25 years ago, Theodorou recalls that the academic program, the research environment, and the growth potential for the clinical care made the UA "a perfect fit for me."

"I'm grateful for the opportunities I've had to contribute to the education of residents and other health care students, contribute to clinical research, and to care for critically ill children and their families. I will always cherish the time I've had here both personally and professionally."

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