

INVESTIGATOR INSIGHT

Patricia Pioli, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology
and of Microbiology and Immunology



Pioli studies the effects of sex hormones (particularly estrogen) on immune function and inflammation. She completed her Ph.D. at Geisel in 2001.

Can you describe your research?

We have observed that estrogen appears to dampen innate immune responses in macrophages. Interestingly, this does not appear true for tamoxifen, which is an estrogen receptor antagonist. We're trying to determine how estrogen attenuates inflammation and how this differs from the action of tamoxifen. Another of our projects is aimed at converting immune cells within breast tumors from tumor-enhancing to tumor-inhibiting.

What got you interested in obstetrics and gynecology?
I've always been fascinated by the process

of pregnancy—the ability of the uterine endometrium to balance protection from infection with the need to maintain an environment that is hospitable to implantation and fetal development. Our research seeks to examine that balance and to determine the role that estrogen plays in mediating immune defense in a more global sense.

What is the quality you most admire? Most despise?

Compassion and empathy are so important yet so undervalued in our society. As a corollary to that, I can't abide apathy.

What kind of music is on your iPod?

I listen to Sesame Street's *Platinum AllTime Favorites* daily, since my children dictate many of my listening choices. Left to my own devices, I have pretty eclectic tastes—they range from Bach to Air Supply. Sesame Street may be an improvement over the latter.

Of what professional accomplishment are you most proud?

I find mentoring students very rewarding—it's so gratifying to see students become independent and valued colleagues.

What three people would you like to have over for dinner?

Rosalind Franklin—it would be fascinating to learn about her contribution to the discovery of the structure of DNA and about her experience as a scientist during the 1950s; Bill Murray, because he's such a talented comedian and diverse actor; and Mickey Mantle, because I'm a huge New York Yankees fan and he was such an important part of their dominance in baseball during the 1950s and '60s.

Before you were 12, what did you think you wanted to be?

I find it astonishing now, but I wanted to be president of the United States, which stemmed from a desire to make a difference in people's lives. Given the current climate of political invective, I can't think of a job I'd enjoy less.

What's the best piece of advice you were ever given?

My mother always told me to be the best version of myself that I can possibly be, to be mindful of myself and not compare myself to others. It's valuable advice that has kept me focused on what's important.

Worthy of Note: Honors, awards, appointments, etc.



Albert Mulley Jr., M.D. (D'70), the director of the Dartmouth Center for Health Care Delivery Science and a Geisel professor of medicine, was elected to the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The honor, one of the highest in medicine, was given in recognition

of Mulley's long history of advocating for involving patients more closely in medical decision-making, including his work as cofounder of the Informed Medical Decisions Foundation and his research on medical outcomes.

Geisel Dean Chip Souba, M.D., Sc.D., M.B.A., says Mulley's election is "a great honor for him personally, and for Dartmouth and the Medical School. Al continues to make significant contributions to primary care, and to improving how patients and health-care professionals make informed decisions together."

Three Geisel School of Medicine faculty members have been named fellows by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society and publisher of the journal *Science*. The faculty honored are **Christopher Amos**, Ph.D., a professor of community and family medicine and associate director for population sciences at Dartmouth-Hitchcock

Norris Cotton Cancer Center; **Mark Israel**, M.D., a professor of pediatrics and of genetics and director of the Norris Cotton Cancer Center; and **Ronald Taylor**, Ph.D., a professor of microbiology and immunology.

As part of a grant from the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, six Geisel students were selected as Schwartz Fellows: **Ana-Maria Dumitru** ('15), **Anna Huh** ('15), **Khushboo Jhala** ('16), **Nicole Vilardo** ('14), **Shelsey Weinstein** ('16), and **Mengyi Zha** ('16). The fellows will work with Geisel faculty and administration to design and implement education on compassion-centered medicine.

For a **WEB EXTRA** with interviews with Schwartz Fellows, visit dartmed.dartmouth.edu/w13/we03