Medical Pharmacology and Physiology

Pharmacology and Physiology
School of Medicine
MA415 Medical Sciences Building
573-882-4957
http://medicine.missouri.edu/mpp/

The joining of these two disciplines provides a powerful way to address modern questions of biology. The department offers MS and PhD degree programs in Pharmacology and Physiology. These programs are designed to prepare students for rewarding teaching and/or research careers in academia, government or the pharmaceutical and biotechnical industries.

Faculty

Assistant Professor C. Baines, T. Domeier*, M. Krenz**, L. Polo-Parada**, J. Smith, G. Sowa**, M. Thakkar**

* Graduate Faculty Member - membership is required to teach graduate-level courses, chair master’s thesis committees, and serve on doctoral examination and dissertation committees.
** Doctoral Faculty Member - membership is required to chair doctoral examination or dissertation committees. Graduate faculty membership is a prerequisite for Doctoral faculty membership.

Undergraduate

While MU does not offer undergraduate degrees specifically in medical pharmacology and physiology, the University does offer baccalaureate opportunities in a number of related areas in the other Schools and Colleges that make up the University. The catalog provides a complete list of these degree options (http://catalog.missouri.edu/degreesanddegreeprograms).

Graduate

- MS in Medical Pharmacology and Physiology (http://catalog.missouri.edu/undergraduategraduate/interdisciplinaryacademicprograms/medicalpharmacologyandphysiology/ms-pharmacology)
- PhD in Medical Pharmacology and Physiology (http://catalog.missouri.edu/undergraduategraduate/interdisciplinaryacademicprograms/medicalpharmacologyandphysiology/phd-pharmacology)

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Pharmacology

Pharmacology is a basic medical science that deals with actions of drugs, hormones and neurotransmitters on living processes. Knowledge based on the results of pharmacological research leads to increased effectiveness and safety in the treatment of diseases in man and animals. Pharmacology is different from pharmacy, which is a profession concerned with the preparation and dispensing of drugs.

Physiology

The discipline of Physiology focuses on understanding the integrative function of living organisms from the molecular to the organismal level. As such, physiological research addresses how genes, organelles, cells, tissues and organs are integrated to accomplish the complex functions of living organisms. From a medical prospective, understanding normal function is a prerequisite to understanding disease.

Areas of Study

Regardless of their final degree objectives, students admitted into the departmental graduate programs will participate in a core curriculum during the first year and choose a specific tract leading to either a degree in Pharmacology or in Physiology following successful completion of the first year. The department also offers specially designed curriculum for individuals interested in a combined MD/graduate degree or who have previous relevant medical education.

Departmental Research

The departmental faculty has expertise in a variety of mammalian systems, with emphases in cardiovascular and endocrine physiology and molecular and cellular pharmacology. Individual labs utilize a number of different experimental models ranging from the whole animal studies to cellular, subcellular, biochemical and modern molecular approaches. Human research is also emphasized.

Research problems under current investigation include microvascular control of blood flow; modulation of vascular function by the extracellular matrix; role of the microcirculation in inflammation and diabetes; mechanisms involved in angiogenesis membrane regulation and ion transport; barriers separating circulating blood and tissue; energetics and metabolism of vascular smooth and cardiac muscle; electrophysiology of isolated cardiac vascular smooth muscle and endothelial cells; exercise physiology and regulation of contractile protein functions; and hormonal induction of genetic transcription, intracellular signaling mechanisms and genetic regulation of cell proliferation, cell cycle, cell differentiation and apoptosis; and the pathogenetic mechanisms of alcohol on liver cells.
Partnerships

Cooperative interactions exist with other clinical and basic science departments in the School of Medicine as well as with the Truman Veterans Hospital, the Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center, the College of Veterinary Medicine, Nutrition and Exercise Department and various campus-wide programs in Molecular Biology and Food for the 21st Century. The cooperative research atmosphere encourages staff and students to work across departmental lines and provides a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary training of the students.

Teaching Experience

In addition to course work and research training, all graduate students are required to participate as teaching assistants in laboratory or lecture instruction offered by the department. Such experience enhances the students’ presentation and teaching skills, contributes to their professional maturity, and reinforces a sense of collegiality between students and faculty.

Financial Aid from the Program

Financial support in this program for qualified graduate students is available from several sources. Students also may be eligible for institutional teaching and research assistantships. In addition, there are a number of fellowship awards from the Graduate School and the campus-wide Life Science Program available on a competitive basis through nominations by the Department.

Deadlines for these fellowships are January to mid-February each year. Applicants do not directly apply for these fellowships. Rather the department applies on behalf of successful applicants for admission. Therefore a prospective candidate should submit an application for admission to the department in the preceding fall. Finally, some of our students are supported by research grants of individual faculty members or by predoctoral fellowships from extramural sources.