**MEDIA RELATIONS**

**USING THE AIR WAVES TO EFFECT POSITIVE HEALTH CHANGES**

The first time Joshua Klapow offered health advice on television channel ABC 33/40, things didn’t go as smoothly as he’d hoped.

“The topic was how to stick with an exercise program,” Klapow explains. “I tried to cover an hour’s worth of material in five minutes, mostly by speaking fast. I wasn’t pleased with my overall performance but I distinctly remember thinking it was an amazing way to get what I know about behavioral science and behavior change out to the public. I was hooked from that moment on.”

Klapow, associate professor of psychology and health care organization and policy, was eventually offered the regular segment “Healthy Habits.” Each Monday during the noon newscast, he gives viewers tips on topics such as setting personal goals, avoiding temptation, and getting a good night’s rest.

“Virtually every health challenge—from obesity and diabetes to medication adherence, preventive screening, and injury prevention—relies primarily on a person doing or abstaining from certain behaviors. The science of behavior change is well established, with incredibly strong tools and techniques. If people use them, they will succeed. If not, they won’t.”

“The work I do with the media provides an important public health service,” Klapow says. “It’s rewarding when people tell me they are trying to use my tips to get healthier.”

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**ON THE JOB SAFETY**

**PROTECTING LAB WORKERS**

Worker safety is at the heart of an expanded surveillance program designed by the Deep South Center for Occupational Health and Safety in conjunction with campus health and safety officials. The program’s goal is to ensure that workers in specific laboratories have a safe environment in which to work.

As part of the surveillance program, employees will be asked to complete a questionnaire to determine if they currently have or have had a medical condition that may make them more susceptible to infection, and if they have received certain vaccinations.

The center’s long-term goal is to have all research-lab workers involved in the surveillance program. “Employee questionnaires are reviewed by an occupational nurse,” says R. Kent Oestenstad, director of the Deep South Center. “If there is a need for follow-up, then an occupational–medicine physician will be called in to review the questionnaire, and the person who filled it out will be referred to occupational medical services. We are providing some initial occupational–medicine services for this program.”

The Deep South Center at UAB, which turned 20 this year, works to prevent disease and injury. It is one of only 16 such centers funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

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**So Much Data, So Little Time**

**Statistical Geneticists Devise a Solution**

For geneticists, locating specific sequences of DNA that cause genetic disorders can be a tricky matter. But Hemant Tiwari, assistant professor of pathology and biostatistics at UAB, says new methods in the field of statistical genetics may help.

In many instances, Tiwari says, scientists will be able to compare DNA sequences between a large population of people predisposed to a particular genetic disorder to control subjects with no such predisposition. The new methods will let researchers use mathematical models to locate particular segments of DNA that may be involved in causing the disorder being studied. However, this statistical process, called linkage analysis, is particularly challenging when looking at diseases or conditions caused by multiple factors.

To help UAB researchers stay abreast of the latest statistical models, Tiwari has teamed with David R. Allison, director of the Section on Statistical Genetics division of the Department of Biostatistics, to create the Linkage & Linkage Disequilibrium Data Analysis Clearinghouse (LDDAC).

“This service will allow UAB researchers to see what resources are available to them, and they can contact us at any time,” says Tiwari. “We can help them with data analysis, designing studies, or writing grants.”