Meet PJ Weaver! PJ is a summer intern with the Conquering Diseases Program and will be entering his senior year at Penn State University this fall. We love all volunteers and are excited to work with volunteers from all walks of life. However, one group is particularly difficult to engage: young people! Young people are difficult to recruit for clinical research because they don’t enter the UMass Memorial health care system nearly as often as older people do. This is good news, certainly, but we want this younger demographic to have the opportunity to participate in the exciting world of medical research. PJ is working hard this summer to harness our social media outlets & promote community outreach, all to encourage participation in research across all age groups. If you would like to volunteer or have ideas for him, please contact PJ at Paul.Weaver@umassmed.edu.

Studies of interest

Are you a woman aged 35 to 64 who smokes? (Docket # 15-311)
It is not clear how smoking affects bone health and function. Weaker bone increases risk for fracture, especially in aging women. Healthy women who smoke (35 to 64 years old), are invited to take part in a single-visit study using a low-dose x-ray to understand how smoking affects bone health. Compensation provided! For more information, please contact Joshua Johnson, PhD at 508-831-5338 or MBL@wpi.edu, or complete the survey. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z895LKL

Are you depressed and have worries or thoughts that don’t make sense? (Docket # 14207)
Patients that are currently suffering from depression with irrational worries are invited to participate in a research study to determine how long people need to stay on an antipsychotic medication after they recover from their symptoms. Study participation will last up to 20 weeks and patients will receive a combination of an antipsychotic medication and an antidepressant medication. Patients must be: 18 to 85 years of age, experiencing symptoms of depression with irrational worries, and not be pregnant. Patients will receive study medication and study-related care at no cost. Qualifying patients will be eligible to participate in 9-month follow-up study. Compensation provided. Contact Chelsea Kosma @ 508-856-5312.

UMass Vitiligo Study Seeking Volunteers (Docket # 14848)
We are looking for people with and without the autoimmune skin disease called Vitiligo. We will collect a small sample of skin and in some cases a blood sample. We want to better understand how autoimmune diseases occur in the skin, including how immune cells choose to initiate disease as well as what causes them to enter the skin. For more information, please contact the Clinical Trials Unit at ClinicalTrials@umassmed.edu or 508-856-2800.

Do you want help reaching your weight loss goals? (Docket #H00009012)
Participate in a research study that includes a 12-month nutrition and physical activity program. Compensation provided. Interested? Please call (508)856-1534 or e-mail study@umassmed.edu.
Sexual Dysfunction in patients with Parkinson’s disease  (Docket # H00009669)

Neurologists who specialize in Movement Disorders at UMass Medical School are studying the effect of Parkinson’s Disease on sexual dysfunction in women. Participants will complete an anonymous questionnaire. For more information, please contact Anas Hannoun, MD at 508-334-2527 or Anas.Hannoun@umassmemorial.org.

Advanced Imaging to Quantify Joint Deformity in Rheumatic Disease  (Docket # H00008930)

The purpose of this study is to collect one blood sample and to perform high resolution CT scans of the hands of rheumatoid arthritis patients, psoriatic arthritis patients and healthy controls. The information from this study will help researchers develop better tools to predict disease progression and disability in rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis. The long term goal of this study is to improve the treatment of arthritis and the quality of life of patients with both conditions. For more information, please contact Janice Weaver at Janice.Weaver@umassmed.edu.

Do you have Rheumatoid Arthritis?  (Docket # H00004371)

The study will monitor the safety and effectiveness of tofacitinib (Xeljanz) and a tumor necrosis factor inhibitor (TNfi), adalimumab (Humira) in subjects with rheumatoid arthritis, comparing the incidence of cardiovascular events and malignancies. Inclusion Criteria: • Moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis • Taking methotrexate 15mg or greater without adequate control of RA symptoms • Have at least one cardiovascular risk factor (eg, current smoker, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, diabetes mellitus, history of heart attack, family history of coronary heart disease). For more information, please contact Steve Ball at Steven.Ball@umassmed.edu or 508-334-0221.

The SNP Study  (Docket # H-00007610)

The goal of this 6-week research study is to assess the effectiveness of Sodium Nitroprusside, an FDA approved drug for management of hypertension, can improve symptoms of schizophrenia. We seek men and women ages 18-60 with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Participants will be compensated for their time and travel, and all information will be kept private. For more information about the study, please call 508-856-MIND (6463) or email MIND@umassmed.edu.

The Memory Study (Docket # H00004119)

This study seeks to see if Exenatide, an investigational drug when used in people with schizophrenia, can improve memory and thinking in people with schizophrenia. Participation in the study will last 24 weeks. You will be compensated for your time. For more information about the study, please call us at 508-856-MIND (6463) or email MIND@umassmed.edu.

The Marijuana Study (Docket # H-00001171)

The purpose of this 14-week research study is to examine whether FDA approved medication Clozapine can reduce marijuana use in those with schizophrenia. We are looking for people ages 18-55 that have a clinical diagnosis of schizophrenia and use marijuana regularly. Those who qualify will receive study-related medical exams, and lab tests at no charge. Compensation for your time and travel may also be available. For more information about the study, please call us at 508-856-MIND(6463) or email MIND@umassmed.edu.