

SIU School of Dental Medicine hosts Research Day

by Megan Wieser
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ALTON - The Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) highlighted the important role research plays in the daily practice and continued advancement of the dynamic profession of dentistry during its 2017 Research Day held Tuesday, April 11.

“Our profession is constantly improving treatment alternatives and introducing new and better options,” said Bruce Rotter, DMD, dean of the SIU SDM. “The dental practitioner must often make choices regarding which are the best procedures and materials to treat their patients. Research forms the basis for these decisions.”

At the School of Dental Medicine, we want our students to have a functional understanding of basic and translational research so they have the ability to make informed decisions as practitioners,” he added.

The event’s featured speaker was John A. Sorensen, DMD, PhD, FACP. Sorensen is a professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry, associate dean of Graduate Studies, director of the Biomimetics Biomaterials Biophotonics Biomechanics and Technology laboratory (B4T) and director of research for the Graduate Prosthodontics Program at the University of Washington School of Dentistry in Seattle.

Dr. Sorensen’s presentation was entitled, “Evidence Based Dentistry are Not Dirty Words – answering questions that arise in everyday practice.”

“As future and currently practicing clinicians, it is critical to understand that the practice of dentistry can be enhanced by asking and answering relevant questions,” said Anita Joy, BDS, PhD, associate professor and director of the SIU SDM Office of Research. “Research at various levels can help us do just that.”



Research Day also featured a Student Table Clinic Exhibition, which featured 13 posters detailing the scholarly work of dental students, as well as resident and faculty-produced research.

Year 2 student Vidhi Pandya was awarded first place for her research project: “Role of TGF- in Cyclosporine-Induced Gingival Overgrowth: A Pilot Study.”

“Vidhi investigated the feasibility of using a novel 3D tissue model to replicate in the lab the dynamics of human gingival tissue,” Joy explained. “She was able to show that the tissue model is a viable tool to study gingival diseases in the lab.”

“I was pleasantly surprised to win first place and appreciated my hard work being recognized,” Pandya said. “I find periodontology and its related aspects to be incredibly interesting. Thus, I wanted to gain more in-depth knowledge into it.”

Pandya conducted her research through the SIU SDM Dean’s Summer Student Research Fellowship (DSSRF), a competitive program designed to introduce students to research.

“I enjoyed the opportunity to apply various concepts that we have learned in class to an experiment,” she added. “It was a rewarding experience that I hope will allow me to stay current on the latest research in order to provide the best possible care for patients in future.”

Dentsply Sirona sponsored the first place award, which provides the recipient the opportunity to present their work at the Annual American Association for Dental Research (AADR) meeting. Pandya will present in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. in March 2018.

[The SIU School of Dental Medicine](#) students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.