The traditional approach to mastering a new medical procedure is "See one, do one, teach one." With the largest Ebola outbreak in history now apparently waning, leaving more than 11,000 dead in its wake (nearly all in west Africa), a nationwide effort is underway to understand the lessons learned and to better prepare the U.S. healthcare system to confront emerging infectious pathogens in the future. As part of that effort, Emory pathologists, infectious disease specialists, nurses, and others who helped successfully care for four Ebola patients at Emory University Hospital in 2014 are sharing their experiences and advice with other professionals through a major teaching project organized by the Atlanta-based U.S. Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC). Supported in part by a 5-year, $12-million NIH grant for which Emory is the lead institution, Associate Professor Charlie Hill, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor Colleen Kraft, M.D., and Emory Medical Laboratories technologist Crystal Evans, are teaching in a series of courses and workshops, based at the CDC campus, for healthcare workers from across the country. They are also traveling to do on-site assessments of outbreak preparedness at the state and local levels. Their topics include details of the point-of-care model that was developed at Emory to provide all needed diagnostic testing inside a high-containment patient-care facility, a model that has since been adopted by hospitals around the world. Another vital take-home message: Learning to safely don and doff your protective gloves, clothing, and equipment is key.

COMMENT: In this case, it’s “See four, save four, teach hundreds.”

Pathologists Prepare for Healthcare Leadership at Emory

Each year since the Emory Clinic launched its own in-house leadership development course for physicians three years ago, Pathology faculty have been nominated and selected to undergo this elite training. The program, now known as EM-ProLEAD, is designed to enhance leadership skills, business knowledge, networking, and collaborative efforts across Emory Medicine, with a unique focus on our own organization, its people, and the local healthcare marketplace. Michelle Reid, M.D., a cytopathologist and surgical pathologist, is among the two-dozen members of the current (2016) class, following in the footsteps of genitourinary pathologist Adeboye Osunkoya, M.D. (2014) and of Vice Chair and transfusion medicine specialist John Roback, M.D., Ph.D. (2015). All three are Associate Professors. The program is directed by Drs. Doug Morris (Cardiology) and Harold Simon (Pediatrics) in collaboration with leaders from the Goizueta Business School.

Leading (left-to-right): Drs. Roback, Reid, and Osunkoya
NEW FACULTY— George Deeb, M.D.

Dr. Deeb was not impressed: His first winter in Atlanta featured a paltry 0.3 inches of snow—meager indeed, compared to the 95 inches that typically fall on Buffalo, New York, where he’s spent most of the past two decades. But could it be that our balmier climate brought back memories of Damascus, Syria, where he was raised, earned his medical degree, and completed two years of AP residency before emigrating to the U.S. in 1998? Landing squarely at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, Dr. Deeb proceeded through a complete four-year AP/CP residency (including a year as Chief Resident) and then a yearlong fellowship in oncologic surgical pathology at its highly regarded affiliate, the Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI). But his true professional passion is hematopathology, which led him next to pursue a year’s fellowship in that subspecialty at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, before returning to join the faculty at the RPCI and SUNY-Buffalo in 2005. Since then, Dr. Deeb has practiced hematopathology full-time, serving those two institutions along with community pathologists and oncologists throughout upstate New York, helping to oversee the flow and image cytometry labs, and rising to be Director of Hematopathology at RPCI from 2010 until we recruited him away to Emory last November. As the newest recruit to our flourishing hemopath service and our new Director of Flow Cytometry, Dr. Deeb has already proven himself an expert diagnostician, a caring and patient-centered physician, a committed teacher, and a wonderful colleague. So we’re not just happy to have him on our faculty—we’re impressed!

NEW FACULTY— Lara Harik, M.D.

Pathology’s clinical services couldn’t function without gifted generalists as well as expert subspecialists on our faculty. Dr. Lara Harik is both. After training that included two specialized clinical fellowships in genitourinary (GU) pathology and a third in the wider landscape of oncologic surgical pathology, Dr. Harik spent the past eight years honing her generalist and GU skills on the faculty at Columbia University in New York, so she was already superbly qualified and experienced by the time she joined our faculty on September 1. We’re proud to have contributed to her training: Graduated from medical school at the American University in Beirut, Dr. Harik came to Emory in 2001 to pursue both AP/CP residency and her first GU fellowship in our program, where early signs of her talent included winning a Stowell-Orbison Certificate-of-Merit for her 2005 USCAP poster surveying 200 needle-core biopsies of kidney masses. Those helped catapult her into her two subsequent fellowships at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and then onto the Columbia faculty, where she worked both as a general surgical pathologist at New York Presbyterian Hospital and on a busy GU outreach service. Along the way, she published nearly a dozen papers and a chapter in the Silverberg textbook, and regularly lectured on general and GU pathology to medical students and residents at Columbia. All of which made Dr. Harik a perfect fit for Emory Pathology, where she now divides her time between the GU service at EUH and our demanding generalist practice at Midtown. How did we ever get along without her?

Case Reports

The American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics has honored Professor Robert Bray, Ph.D., as recipient of the 2014 Terasaki Clinical Science Award. The award recognizes his many “significant accomplishments and contributions to the fields of clinical transplantation, histocompatibility, and immunogenetics.” Together with his longtime colleague, Howard Gebel, Ph.D., Dr. Bray is co-Director of our internationally acclaimed Histocompatibility and Molecular Immunogenetics clinical laboratory, which is critical to the success of Emory’s organ-transplantation programs.

Professor Jim Ritchie, Ph.D., our Director of Emory Medical Laboratories, has been elected to a three-year cycle of leadership of the National Academy of Clinical Biochemists, which is the scientific branch of the American Association of Clinical Chemistry. Dr. Ritchie will serve as President-Elect for 2016, as President in 2017, and as Past-President in 2018.
Immunologist and infectious diseases researcher Professor Aftab Ansari, Ph.D., has been appointed to serve on the NIAID Council, the chief advisory committee of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases in the NIH. This 18-member blue-ribbon committee meets three times annually to advise the NIAID leadership on policy matters, perform second-level reviews of grant applications and programs, and contribute technical guidance on broad research priorities and directions for the Institute. Dr. Ansari’s four-year term extends through October 2019.
On August 28, our Department gathered to celebrate the career of Professor Bhagirath Majmudar, M.D. – pathologist, teacher, role model, and guru – on the occasion of his retirement. Thanks and best wishes, Dr. Maj!