MDs Doing Less Research, Book Argues

The diminished role of physicians in medical research is the subject of a new book edited by Department of Medicine chairman Andrew Schafer, MD. Published in December by Cornell University Press, The Vanishing Physician-Scientist chronicles a movement away from bench research by MDs and offers ideas for spurring their participation. “In the last thirty years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of non-physician PhDs conducting medical research that starts in a laboratory, while the number of physicians in academic medical centers conducting research has declined,” says Schafer, physician-in-chief at NYP/Weill Cornell. "This is a major shift from the previous era, when physicians often initiated research based on patient observations and led the research effort from clinical studies to laboratory work.”

Hospital Power Plant Goes Green

In November, NYP/Weill Cornell unveiled the first hospital-based co-generation plant in Manhattan. Located at 70th Street and York Avenue, the plant will generate 60 to 100 percent of the medical center’s electricity and help fulfill its pledge to decrease carbon emissions 30 percent by 2018. The 7.5-megawatt plant burns natural gas to generate electricity, then captures heat from the turbine to create steam for heating and cooling. It will cut 20,000 tons of pollutants per year and save millions of dollars. Says NYP executive vice president Steven Corwin, MD: “The Medical College is a direct beneficiary of this technology since it shares power and heating systems with the hospital, its next-door neighbor on York Avenue.”

Corrections

“To Shatter the Ceiling” (Fall 2009) included an incorrect title for Randi Silver, PhD. Her correct title is associate dean of the Graduate School. In the same issue, we mistakenly omitted the name of David S. Blumenthal, MD ’75, from our list of 2008-09 donors. We are most grateful for the long-standing, generous support of Dr. Blumenthal and sincerely regret this oversight.

Scope

Sheikh Named Dean of WCMC-Q

Javaid Sheikh, MD, interim dean of the Qatar branch since January 2009, has been appointed to the position on a permanent basis. A psychiatrist with expertise in anxiety disorders, Sheikh joined WCMC-Q in 2007 as vice dean for research. He succeeds Daniel Alonzo, MD, the branch’s inaugural dean.

TIP OF THE CAP TO...

Peter Adamson, MD ’84, a pediatric oncologist at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute, named head of the Children’s Oncology Group, which unites more than 5,000 experts in the field worldwide.

Ronald Arky ’51, MD ’55, dean of curriculum at Harvard Medical School, winner of the Alpha Omega Alpha Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award from the AAMC.

Psychiatry chairman Jack Barchas, MD, recipient of the Academy Plaque for Exceptional Service from the New York Academy of Medicine.

Joseph Fins, MD ’86, chief of the Division of Medical Ethics, elected president of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities.

Public health chairman Alvin Mushlin, MD, elected to the American Clinical and Climatological Association.

Elizabeth Nabel, MD ’81, named president of Brigham and Women’s/Faulkner Hospitals. Nabel was also selected as a torchbearer for the relay leading up to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games.

Gene Resnick ’70, MD ’74, winner of the Outstanding Alumni Award from Cornell’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

William Schaffner, MD ’62, given the American College of Preventive Medicine’s Ronald Davis Special Recognition Award for his public health leadership.