University of Kansas 's mental retardation center celebrates 40th anniversary

http://www.freelight.cn 2007-04-28

[作者] University of Kansas
[单位] University of Kansas
[摘要] April 25, 2007, KANSAS CITY, Kan. — The Kansas Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center, a bi-campus effort on the Lawrence and medical center campuses at the University of Kansas, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.
[关键词] 40th anniversary mental retardation

April 25, 2007, KANSAS CITY, Kan. — The Kansas Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center, a bi-campus effort on the Lawrence and medical center campuses at the University of Kansas, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

Since its establishment as one of the country's original 12 mental retardation research centers funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the KIDDRC has helped pioneer effective behavioral interventions aimed at the causes, prevention and treatment for mental retardation and related development disabilities.

The center currently is comprised of more than 60 faculty researchers, including three in the the communication and cognitive programs at KU's Lawrence campus and three in the reproductive biology and the neuroscienceas groups at the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, Kan. These researchers have more than 70 research programs funded by the National Institutes of Health and other organizations, focusing on various aspects of mental retardation and devel

The center holds the distinction of having received continuous funding from the NIH throughout the four decades of its existence. The NIH recently awarded the center with an additional five years of funding.

"You don't hold onto these grants because of your history, you win them because you're conducting important and sound scientific research," said Steve Warren, director of the KIDDRC. "We've been awarded funding throughout our existence because we've always focused on our areas of strength."

The center has four primary areas of research: language, communication disorders and cognition in mental retardation; risk, intervention and prevention in mental retardion; neurobiology of mental retardation; and cellular and molecular biology of early development.

There are an estimated 7 million people with mental retardation in the United States. At least 2 million of these individuals require ongoing services and supports. When the NICHHD founded the mental retardation research centers, Warren said, little was known about developmental disorders and, more often than not, those that suffered from such conditions were often institutionalized and had very short life expectancies. Today, thanks to research that has led n

Warren said there is still a great deal to be learned about developmental disorders, but the KIDDRC is better poised to make these discoveries now more than ever before.

"Forty years later, we're much, much closer to understanding the genetic and molecular basis for these disorders," Warren said. "With our research, we have a real chance to improve the quality of life of those Kansans currently facing these conditions and to develop better means of detecting and preventing these disorders in the future."

Peter Smith, co-

director of the KIDDRC, said the potential to make significant breakthroughs has been augmented by improved research technology that has enabled investigators to collect and process more data than ever before.

"You have to recognize the tremendous benefits of cutting-

edge technology and how it can allow you to be more aggressive in your research," Smith said.

Smith also said research is changing in that clinical and basic science programs are moving closer together and there is more collaboration between researchers in different specialties. This increased interaction is likely to move developments from the laboratory bench to the patients' bedside much more rapidly in the future, Smith said.

Barbara Atkinson, executive vice chancellor of the KU Medical Center, said the KIDDRC's research principles have helped make it highly relevant and durable throughout its history.

"So many of the original concepts still remain fresh and important and very much in line with current priorities of both the university and the NIH, including the emphasis on multidisciplinary research, current technologies, and translational research," Atkinson said.

Pressured on the medical center campus have recently moved into the new Kansas Life Sciences Innovation Center, a space specifically designed to facilitate greater collaboration among researchers.

"Moving into our new facilities has really been a watershed event for us," Smith said. "We've too greater capabilities both in terms of equipment and in terms of creating efficiencies through collaboration. This is a very exciting time for us."

北京百道利科技有限公司 Copyright © 2003-2008 Email: house@freelight.cn