The critical topic of race in health care was the focus of a dynamic conversation during the annual YWCA Stand Against Racism event April 27 in Richard B. Simches Research Center.

Sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), the Disparities Solutions Center and the Center for Community Health Improvement, the event featured a panel discussion with three MGHers, moderated by Elena Olson, CDI executive director.

“As health care professionals, we are trained to feel comfortable talking about end-of-life and countless other difficult conversations with patients and families,” said panelist Altaf Saadi, MD, Neurology resident. “But we still aren’t able to talk with each other about race.”

Panelists discussed their own experiences related to racism, unconscious bias and cross-cultural interactions in the health care setting. Gaurdia Banister, RN, PhD, executive director of the Patient Care Services Institute for Patient Care, shared how growing up in Casper, Wyoming, helped shape who she is today, despite the incredible challenges she faced as an African-American.

(Continued on page 4)
**ALS Imaging Tool May Help With Diagnosis and Treatment**

One big challenge in developing treatments for Lou Gehrig’s disease—also called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS—is that there is no reliable way to track the progression of the disease in the brain and gauge the effectiveness of new treatments. However, researchers at the MGH were recently able to use a radiotracer (an injectable, short-lived radioactive element) to track inflammation in the neural pathways of ALS patients. Brain inflammation is an important target in developing ALS drugs, and being able to track it should help investigators design better clinical trials and speed the pace of drug discovery.

**Implantable Device Aims to Treat Pancreatic Cancer at the Source**

A research team from the MGH and MIT has designed a tiny, adjustable implant that could be used to deliver chemotherapy drugs directly into pancreatic cancers, instead of requiring the drugs to travel through the entire circulatory system to reach the pancreas. In laboratory models, delivering treatment directly to the source proved to be 12 times more effective than intravenous delivery, the common treatment for pancreatic cancer. Approximately 80 percent of the 48,000 people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer each year in the United States die from the disease, so there is an urgent need for better treatment options. An implantable chemotherapy system may also prove to be effective in treating other cancers and could help prevent the side effects that occur when intravenous chemotherapy drugs travel throughout the body.

**Study Supports Connection Between Good Hygiene and Increase in Autoimmune Disorders**

Could our efforts to live in a germ-free society have an unanticipated drawback? A multi-institutional team that includes researchers from the MGH is investigating the so-called “hygiene hypothesis,” which suggests that early exposure to bacteria and other microbes early in life may help train the immune system to function properly and reduce the likelihood of developing autoimmune diseases and allergies. The team examined the gut microbial population of infants from three adjacent countries—Finland, Estonia and the Karelian area of Russia. They found that microbes from infants in the largely underdeveloped Karelian area were markedly different from those in the more modernized countries of Estonia and Finland and that Karelian infants had lower rates of autoimmune disorders and allergies, which suggests there may be some validity to the hygiene hypothesis.

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**Office Supply Swap**

**Have a Desk Littered** with unopened toner cartridges from an old printer, extra file folders, gently used three-ring binders, boxes of unused pens and pencils, or small desk accessories? Free up space and help fellow MGHers by recycling any new or gently used office supplies and small desk accessories at the MGH Team’s Biennial Office Supply Swap, hosted by the Supply Swap and Recycle Event Committee. The dates for this year’s swap are:

- **May 17:** In the Charlestown Navy Yard Campus, Conference Room A on the first floor of Building 149. Drop-off from 9 – 11 am and pickup from noon – 2 pm.
- **May 19:** In the Bulfinch Tent. Drop-off from 9 – 11 am and pickup from noon – 2 pm.

All items left from the Charlestown Navy Yard event will be transported to the MGH main campus for the May 19 swap. All attendees must present an MGH ID to participate. Recycled supplies will be available on a first-come, first-served basis, and are intended for use at the MGH. All items left at the end of the day will be donated or recycled.

For more information, including detailed lists of accepted items, visit [http://intranet.massgeneral.org/recycle/](http://intranet.massgeneral.org/recycle/).
The four ‘C’s’ of leadership

CALLING HERSELF a big believer in the notion that slowing down speeds you up, Pamela D.A. Reeve, MBA, got dozens of people from the MGH to slow down and consciously reflect on succeeding at all levels during the eighth annual Nancy J. Tarbell Faculty Development Lecture Series hosted by the MGH Center for Faculty Development.

Reeve, now vice chair of the MGPO Board of Trustees, shared light-hearted lessons stretching from her days as a single mom at Harvard Business School to her role as CEO of Lightbridge, Inc. – a company she took public and led for 15 years.

Mentioning the recent rollout of Partners eCare at the MGH, Reeve’s presentation on “Leadership in Turbulent Times” focused not just on the disorder of change – something she calls unavoidable – but more about four “C” words.

CONFIDENCE
“Remember your purpose,” said Reeve. If good counsel or help is needed along the way, look for it, she says, but keep moving forward with positivity and humility. And when knocked down, don’t be afraid to let anger serve as a motivation. As an MBA candidate, Reeve recalls a professor telling her she would “never make it.” “Don’t give power to other people,” she stressed.

CONSCIOUS
Sometimes the most urgent task is to take a pause and be present, said Reeve. That requires a slowdown, celebrating the small victories along the way and something she called “opti-realism.” Remaining optimistic is always important, she said, but stay realistic and “recognize the muck” in the moment.

COMMUNITY
Make a call and take a call. Ask for advice but also give advice. Establishing a strong network of people is important during times of turbulence on a personal and enterprise level, said Reeve, but so too is helping others.

CARE
Caring for personal physical and mental health is hugely important to success and makes for a more effective leader, said Reeve, but self-care is also about “setting boundaries.” Some calls can probably wait until the weekend is over, she said.

For more information, www.massgeneral.org/facultydevelopment.
Award-winning film screening highlights Asian-American mental illness

ON APRIL 28, as part of its annual Spring Speaker Series, the MGH Department of Psychiatry Center for Diversity hosted a screening of the award-winning documentary film “Can.” The screening attracted more than 100 attendees, and was followed by a panel discussion including the filmmaker and director Pearl J. Park and the subject of the film, Can Truong. The event was organized by Juliana Chen, MD, MGH Child and Adolescent Psychiatry fellow, with funding support through the American Psychiatric Association Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Minority Fellowship Program. Bringing attention to a national disparity in behavioral health, “Can” is one of the first documentary films highlighting the experience of mental illness from an Asian-American perspective.

A FILM FIRST:
From left, Josephine Kim PhD; Pata Suyemoto PhD; Catherine Vuky PhD; Nhi-Ha Trinh, MD, director, Department of Psychiatry Center for Diversity; Park; Anne Emmerich, MD, associate director, Department of Psychiatry Center for Diversity; Chen; and Justin Chen, MD, MPH, Department of Psychiatry

Stand against racism (Continued from page 1)

“We are scared to death to have these conversations because we are afraid of saying the wrong thing,” said Banister. “As we build a team, we need to get to know each other not only professionally, but also as people.”

Marcela G. del Carmen, MD, MPH, MGPO medical director and MGH gynecologic oncologist, was born in Nicaragua and spoke about her own difficult experiences that she said have empowered her to move forward and address the issue directly, which is important for building and maintaining trust.

“We need to figure out how to have the right conversations, and to own it,” she said. “Regardless of who you are or what you do, we all need to speak up and feel comfortable doing so.”

Panelists also shared practical steps and strategies to approaching the topic of racism today. Those in attendance were encouraged to not be a bystander – but an ally – by speaking up when they see or hear behavior that is inappropriate. Banister encouraged self-reflection and awareness through education, noting that the MGH provides many cross-cultural educational opportunities. The group also highlighted enhancing the diversity of the workforce and the key role each staff member plays in hiring and developing diverse talent.

“We all are often the bystanders to events,” said Saadi, who wears a traditional head scarf, which she said identifies her as a Muslim woman and sometimes leads to hurtful discriminatory experiences. “Speak up; don’t let things get swept under the rug. Talking about it will lead to the change we want to see.”

Awards highlight exceptional care at the MGH

THE MGH WILL BE FEATURED in a number of print and digital advertisements in leading publications from Washington, D.C. to Maine, highlighting the MGH’s exceptional care and No. 1 ranking by U.S. News & World Report. Display ads will also appear at Logan International Airport and in Delta and American Airlines sky clubs at airports including Reagan, LaGuardia, Logan and Newark. The ads are expected to begin running next week. They include a link to massgeneral.org, where readers can learn more about the MGH mission and the hospital’s world-class medical care and leading-edge research.