UNC NDSS Program Receives CAAHEP Accreditation

The UNC NDSS program recently earned programmatic accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) through the Committee on Accreditation of Polysomnography Education (CoA-PSG). The UNC NDSS program is the first bachelor’s level sleep program in the world to achieve this standard. This accreditation validates that the NDSS program meets the highest level of standards associated with the field of sleep technology.

 UNC NDSS Program Expands Student Global Outreach

Our students participate in practicum, internships, and research projects during their time at UNC. These projects involve a wide variety of sleep topics and offer superior learning opportunities for our students. NDSS graduates state that these opportunities are “priceless.” We have expanded to allow our students to have a first hand in selecting their projects and locations to cater to their interests and to community needs. Sites include industry, educational institutions, professional societies and accrediting bodies, and many others. In particular, this past summer, one of our students completed his NDSS practicum by arranging a trip to Ethiopia where trained nine new technologists and established three EEG labs in northern Ethiopia.

“It’s hard to believe that four weeks are over! I am back home after training nine EEG techs and establishing three EEG labs in northern Ethiopia. During my project in Ethiopia, there have been highs and lows, but that’s to be expected.

After arriving in Addis Ababa, and receiving clearance for the EEG machines from the customs office, I traveled to Mekelle, a city that was torn apart during the civil war around 20-30 years ago. Even though you still notice the profound marks from the war, you can easily tell that the city is growing rapidly.

Before the start of my training, I visited an elementary school which is just in front of the Ayder hospital (where I gave the training for seven days). The elementary school called is also called Ayder. According to my driver who used to be a student at the elementary school, one afternoon while the students playing outside in a beautiful day, they saw some beautiful sparkling stuff coming from the sky. Some of the students were amazed by what they saw, while others were just questioning what that could be. Unfortunately, that “beautiful sparkling” stuff was a 100-pound bomb dropped by the Eritrean Air Force jet during the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The school was littered with bodies and blood. The Ayder hospital emergency personnel and staff rushed there to help the students. To make things worse, an hour later the Eritrean Air Force jet came back with another round of bombs. The second bomb killed emergency personnel, hospital staffs, parents and even more children.

As I mentioned before, the training was held at Mekelle University Ayder Referral Hospital Campus. According to the hospital website, Ayder
Bereket training the new technologists

The training consisted of lectures, discussions, group work and hands-on practice. The trainees accomplished the tasks with great initiative and a positive attitude. After completing the training and establishing the first ever EEG lab in Mekelle, I flew back to the capital city of Addis Ababa to catch another plane to fly to Bahir Dar (Lake Tana) to assemble the EEG machine and establish another EEG lab.

Bahir Dar is known for its wide avenues lined with palm trees and a variety of colorful flowers. It is also considered to be one of the most beautiful, well planned, and safest cities in Ethiopia. The city is founded near the place where Blue Nile stems from Lake Tana; Lake Tana is the source of the Nile River.

The Bahir Dar University Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital was built around 90 years ago for a population of 25-30,000 people. The hospital now serves close to 6 million people. Every single room in the hospital used for patient care, therefore; there is no enough room to accept all the patients coming for a treatment; not surprisingly the hospital bed usage is always more than 100%. We really had a hard time finding an ideal room to use as the EEG lab. Finally, after a series of meetings and room visits, we found one small room in the corner of the psych unit, but the room has no working power outlet and door. Thanks to the hospital leadership, the electrician and the facility staff, they were able to get the room ready on the same day.

My next stop was the city of Gondar. Driving from Bahir Dar to Gondar takes three hours. I spent more time waiting for the driver than driving to Gondar. By the way, nobody rushes here, they take time for everything. Even if they tell you that they are on their way, it could be hours. As the same time I remembered the book I read and learned a life time lesson; we always want things to go our way, according to our time line, and at the pace of our own schedule, but we are not living in the world that is designed just for us. So being flexible and patient is vital to being able to work with others.

Gondar is located in northwest Ethiopia, and it is a city with a long tradition. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Gondar was the capital city of Ethiopia. It is famous for its many castles and the design and decoration of its churches.

The University of Gondar Hospital is the oldest and largest referral hospital in north-west Ethiopia. It is positioned to serve a population of more than 5 million and about 200,000 patients visit the hospital from different part of the country. The hospital was built 85 years ago by the Italians. During my stay in Gondar, besides establishing the first EEG lab in the area, I was able to fix a donated Neuromax EMG machine that was not functioning for more than a year. Also, the establishment of the EEG lab at Gondar covered by the regional radio station.

During my time here in northern Ethiopia, there were some struggles, but I managed to turn things around in time and still have a meaningful experience. I can say that the project which is training EEG techs and establishing three EEG labs has been a success, and it has also been a huge learning experience. With the EEG machine, the university hospitals that are serving millions of people in north Ethiopia will improve the care they provide to patients with epilepsy and will also provide practical training to residents and students. Even though the project is done, I also realized that there are still plenty to do.

- Bereket Habte
The UNC Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science (NDSS) program hosted the second annual “A Day of Sleep” Symposium sponsored by Tempur Sealy International on Friday, December 5, 2014, on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The symposium theme was “Practical Methods of Measuring Sleep and Sleep Quality” and featured lectures by UNC NDSS faculty and students on topics such as pediatric sleep, sleep as a function of the brain, behavior and performance outcomes related to sleep, temperature and the human circadian cycle, sleep efficiency and practical considerations for improving sleep. The symposium was offered as a free continuing education course for UNC NDSS students, faculty, UNC Health Care polysomnographic technologists, and other UNC health professionals.

Tempur Sealy International has been a generous Platinum Partner of the UNC NDSS Corporate Partners Program since 2012, and the company has funded seven scholarships for students from across the country over the past two years. The four 2014-15 Tempur Sealy International UNC NDSS Scholarship recipients that will be recognized at the symposium are Nicole Barnes from Plymouth, NC, Bereket Habte from Centennial, Colorado, Jonathan Upchurch from Greenville, NC, and Tammy Williams from Pinehurst, NC. The program is part of a partnership between the bedding producer and the country’s only bachelor’s degree program for sleep clinicians to drive insight, innovation, and treatments for people who spend one third of their lives, officials said.

“Once again, Tempur Sealy International is proud to have been a Platinum Partner of the UNC NDSS program for the past two years as we work together to sponsor the education and training of clinicians, administrators, and educators in the treatment of sleep disorders and funding for sleep research. The University of North Carolina’s NDSS faculty and students share our never-ending passion for investment in research and development and treatments for better sleep,” said Dan Query, senior vice president of global product development at Tempur Sealy International.

The UNC NDSS bachelor’s degree, the first of its kind in the world, is offered by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, with collaborative coursework offered by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Graduates of the UNC NDSS program benefit from the unique curricula which reflect the ever-changing nature of clinical practice and patient care. This innovative, online degree program is designed to help meet the rapidly expanding need for neurodiagnostic and sleep technology professionals. The 2nd class of UNC NDSS Program students graduated in May 2014.

**NDSS Graduate honored with Sleep Excellence Award**

Tanisha Burke earns the NCASM Sleep Excellence Award – This award is the most prestigious sleep award in North Carolina recognizing an individual who has made significant contributions in sleep medicine practice, research, education, leadership, or advocacy in North Carolina. Tanisha earned a BS Biology and BS Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science at UNC Charlotte. She has been an active sleep technologist for the past 10 years at Carolinas Sleep Services for Carolinas Healthcare System in Charlotte, NC. Tanisha serves on the NCASM Education Task Force and has authored editorials for the NCASM newsletters. She was a speaker at the past 2014 annual meeting. She is an avid volunteer in the sleep community. She is relentlessly committed to advancing sleep medicine and has much compassion for her patients and peers. Tanisha is one of the first graduates of the world’s first Bachelor’s degree in Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science at UNC. She recently published her research in the Journal of Pulmonology and Respiratory Research under the title “Domiciliary Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Therapy in an Underserved Population: Compliance and Influential Factors.”

**Thank You to our Sponsor**

Tempur+Sealy

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**Keynote Speakers**

Victoria Morris, AAS, RPSGT  
Jonathan Upchurch, AAS, RPSGT  
Jeffrey Taylor, AAS, RPSGT  
Karen Rosenstock, AAS, RPSGT  
Susan Syphaseut, AAS, RPSGT  
Richard Johnson, AAS, RPSGT  
Bereket Habte, AAS, R.EEG Te  
Kevin Barnes, AAS, RPSGT  
Nicole Critcher Barnes, AAS  
Brooke Davenport, AAS, RPSGT  
Jessica Ward, AAS, RPSGT

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**Student Presenters**

Brad Vaughn, MD  
Heidi Roth, MD  
Sujay Kansagra, MD

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**Student Presenters**

Top: NDSS Corporate Partners, Students, and attendees of the NDSS Sleep Symposium; Sujay Kansagra, MD – Duke University (pictured on left); Brad Vaughn, MD – UNC (pictured on right).
NDSS Graduates and students present at NCASM

Tanisha Burke, BS, RPSGT, and Sonya McNeill, BS, RPSGT jointly presented the classifications of narcolepsy. Their presentation included diagnostic criteria, clinical features, and treatment of narcolepsy; as well as a description of techniques to improve quality for patients with narcolepsy disorders. Tanisha is employed by Carolinas Sleep Services in Charlotte, NC, and Sonya is employed by Southeastern Sleep Center in Lumberton, NC.

Brittany Tolar, BS, RPSGT, presented on methods to engage employers and introduce new ideas surrounding the sleep apnea treatment continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP). She discussed her novel CPAP mask fitting questionnaire, and described strategies for integrating these questionnaires into practice to promote compliance with therapy and aid in proper mask selection. Brittany is currently employed by Feeling Great Sleep Medical Center in Jacksonville, NC.

Inaugural Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science Annual Scholarship
A generous gift from the UNC Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science program’s medical director Bradley Vaughn and his wife, Karen, provided funding for the inaugural merit-based scholarship. Recipient: Sarah Sireca Yisrael, Farmville, North Carolina

Tempur Sealy International Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science Annual Scholarships
As a founding platinum partner in the 2012 UNC Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science Corporate Partners Program, Tempur Sealy has generously provided three merit-based scholarships for the 2013-14 academic year. Tempur Sealy is focused on developing, manufacturing, and marketing advanced sleep surfaces that help improve the quality of life for people around the world.

Recipients: Nicole Critcher Barnes, Plymouth, North Carolina
           Bereket Habte, Centennial, Colorado
           Jonothan Lee Upchurch, Greenville, North Carolina
           Tammy Williams, Pinehurst, North Carolina

The Smith Family Foundation Scholarships
The Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation generously made a gift to provide three scholarships for deserving students studying in the UNC Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science program for the 2013-14 academic year.

Recipients: Richard Hayes Johnson, Timberlake, North Carolina
           Beth Ann Payne, Kinston, North Carolina
           Jeffrey Scott Taylor, Statesville, North Carolina

Nihon Kohden Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science Annual Scholarship
As a founding gold partner in the 2012 UNC Neurodiagnostics and Sleep Science Corporate Partners Program, Nihon Kohden, as a 2014 gold partner, has generously provided a merit-based scholarship for the 2013-14 academic year. Nihon Kohden is Japan’s leading manufacturer, developer, and distributor of medical electronic equipment with subsidiaries in the USA, Europe, and Asia and distributors in nearly every country in the world.

Recipient: Ashley Phillips Hastings, Lincolnton, NC

Recent Publications and Presentations


Presentations
• Wells, M.E. Nerve Conduction Studies Hands-on workshop, August 21st, 2014. Presentation at the Neurodiagnostic Society Annual Conference, Asheville, NC

Publications