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UNC Nutrition Research Institute Partners with International Researcher from Keimyung University, Korea

The UNC Nutrition Research Institute (NRI) in Kannapolis, NC welcomes Dr. Seung-Wan Ryu, M.D., Ph.D. Dr. Ryu, Associate Professor in Department of Gastrointestinal Surgery at the Keimyung University School of Medicine in Korea, is visiting the NRI to collaborate on cutting edge nutrition research, critical to his role as Director of the Nutritional Support Team at Keimyung University Dongsan Medical Center.

Dr. Ryu joined the NRI in September 2009 to focus on how nutrition impacts stomach cancer. Specifically, Dr. Ryu is studying whether dietary choline, found in eggs and other foods, influences the growth of blood vessels needed to support tumor growth. Dr. Ryu and Dr. Steven Zeisel M.D., Ph.D., Director of the NRI, are collaborating on this research. Dr. Ryu shares, “I am very grateful for Dr. Zeisel’s active support of my work on all possible occasions. All the staff and scientists at the NRI are so kind and their passion for learning is amazing.”

Dr. Ryu explains that as a University Professor in Korea, he is provided the opportunity to study abroad for one to two years, funded by a specialized Keimyung University scholarship. The study of nutritional support of cancer patients is still evolving, and Dr. Ryu explains that his time with the NRI affords his team in Korea significant research collaboration and clinical application opportunity. He intends to continue the relationship after his return home, sharing, “I will introduce our research to Korean and other doctors using an international conference, and will continue nutritional research on the basis of my NRI experience. I will want to remain in contact with the NRI forever.”

Dr. Ryu has become an integral partner in the NRI choline lab over the past few months, as Dr. Zeisel states, “We are thrilled to host such a dedicated and promising scholar who is well-positioned to develop international research partnerships for years to come. Dr. Ryu is a bright young scientist, and I appreciate his collaboration, both here at the NRI this year, as well as on longer term research projects.”

With his family, a wife and two young children, Dr. Ryu moved to America last September, living abroad for the first time. They held some concern about the move, as few Koreans live in this area, and they prepared for an obvious language barrier

and cultural difference. However, the Ryu family has found a helpful embrace by the locals. “Everyone is so kind. We really enjoy American life, and now have many American friends who really want to help us. I will recommend the NRI and this area to other doctors who want to study nutrition.”

Unlike Dr. Ryu, many young scientists do not have a scholarship opportunity from their home university or local government. If you are interested in helping a young scholar like Dr. Ryu partner with the NRI toward critical research, visit uncnri.org/MakeAGift.asp to learn about the NRI’s Great Scientist Recruitment Fund.

About NRI

The UNC Nutrition Research Institute (NRI), part of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is located on the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis. The NRI is dedicated to developing the field of individualized nutrition — understanding variance in people’s DNA, metabolism and nutrient requirements and how this impacts health. Long term, the NRI’s discoveries will lead to individually tailored nutrition recommendations that will allow people to customize their diets in order to maximize wellness and reduce risk of disease.

For more information on the Nutrition Research Institute, or to schedule an interview, contact Monica Hughes at the UNC Nutrition Research Institute at 704-250-5008.

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Dr. Seung-Wan Ryu studies choline in relation to gastric cancer and blood vessels in the NRI laboratory.