



September 3, 2021

## Welcome New Faculty in Cardiothoracic Surgery, Cardiology



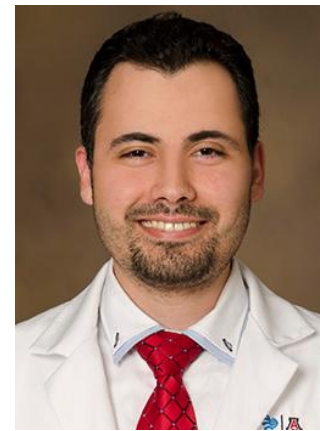
**Robert L. Hooker, MD**

Jack G. Copeland  
Endowed Chair of  
Cardiothoracic Surgery  
and Michael Drummond  
Distinguished Professor of  
Cardiovascular and  
Thoracic Surgery



**Michel T. Corban, MD**

Clinical Assistant  
Professor, Medicine  
Interventional Cardiology



**Saad Kubba, MD**

Clinical Assistant  
Professor, Medicine  
Advanced Heart Disease  
and Transplant Cardiology

Sarver Heart Center welcomed three new clinical members to the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson this summer.

**Robert L. Hooker, MD**, is chief, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and the Sarver Heart Center Jack G. Copeland Endowed Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery and Michael Drummond Distinguished Professor of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery. Dr. Hooker has nearly 25 years of clinical experience specializing in cardiac, thoracic, and transplant

surgery.

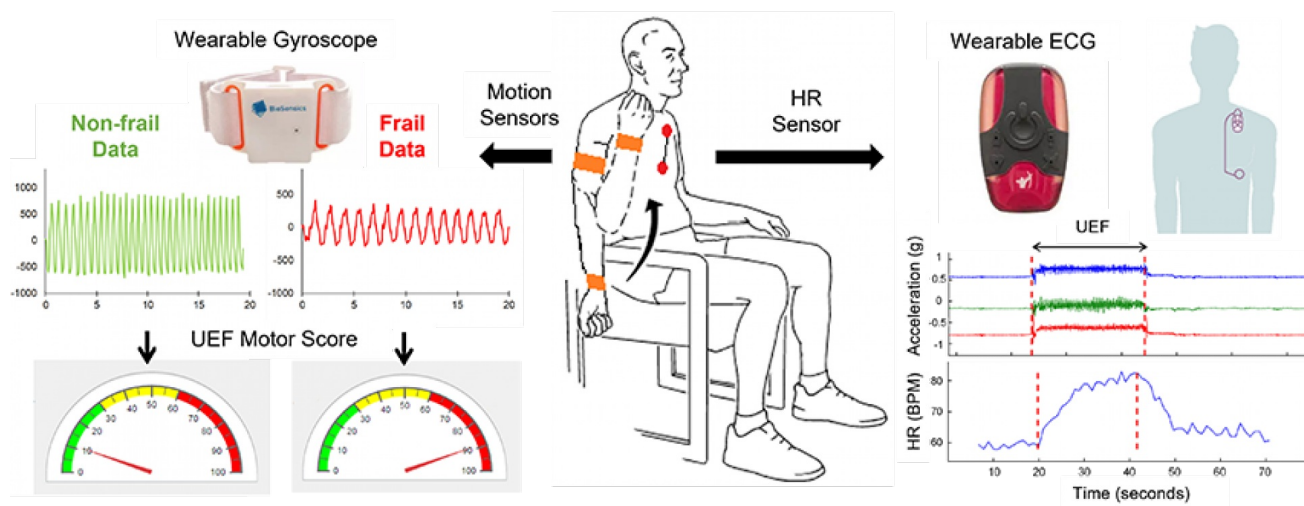
**Michel T. Corban, MD**, clinical assistant professor of medicine, Division of Cardiology, is a board-certified interventional cardiologist and clinical researcher with expertise in percutaneous coronary interventions (catheter procedures), coronary physiology, and structural heart disease interventions.

**Saad Kubba, MD**, clinical assistant professor of medicine, Division of Cardiology is board-certified in cardiovascular disease. A graduate of the Sarver Heart Center Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program, Dr. Kubba returned to UArizona after completing an Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology fellowship at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

*Click on their names for more detailed profiles.*

[Find Sarver Heart Center Clinical Faculty Member Profiles Here](#)

## Developing a Better Way to Measure Frailty



Frailty is a common concern for patients with advanced heart disease. Most people understand what we mean when we refer to someone as frail. In medicine, frailty can be defined as a loss of fitness and reserve. While often associated with aging, frailty accompanies many forms of heart disease, even in those who are younger.

Heart disease treatments have advanced tremendously and some, such as mechanical assist devices and heart valve implants, can be especially beneficial to treat patients' conditions, as long as they have the physical strength to recover from an invasive procedure.

To improve patient frailty assessments, **Nancy K. Sweitzer, MD, PhD**, a cardiologist who specializes in advanced heart disease and heart

transplant, is collaborating with **Nima Toosizadeh, PhD**, a biomedical engineer who has been studying frailty with the University of Arizona Center on Aging. They are conducting a clinical research study to develop a reliable frailty score and use it to set parameters to predict patients most likely to benefit from an invasive cardiovascular procedure versus someone whose frailty is not solely due to the heart condition, and who is therefore less likely to recover and improve following a procedure.

[Read More About the Frailty Clinical Study](#)

## Can a Simple Breathing Exercise Improve Sleep and Blood Pressure?



*Research Technician Aida Hawatmeh (left) coaches a standardized patient through inspiratory muscle training.*

**E. Fiona Bailey, PhD**, professor of physiology at the UArizona College of Medicine – Tucson, was awarded a five-year, \$3.4 million grant from the National Institute on Aging, a division of the National Institutes of Health, to build on her group's previous research that showed a respiratory workout entailing 30 breaths a day can lower blood pressure.



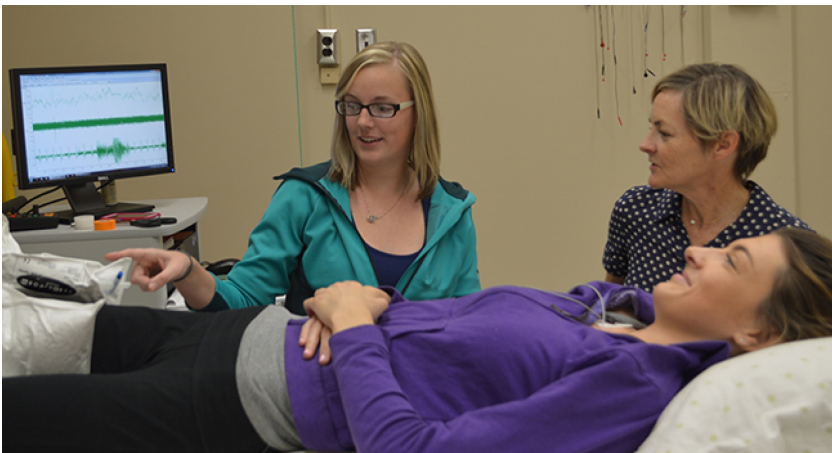
"High blood pressure is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which is the number one cause of death in America. Five minutes a day of inspiratory muscle training, consisting of just 30 inspiratory efforts against resistance, offers a low-cost, non-pharmacologic means of

improving both sleep quality and blood pressure,” said Dr. Bailey, a Sarver Heart Center member who specializes in respiratory physiology.

Obstructive sleep apnea is a serious health condition in which the muscles of the throat relax during sleep and collapse inward so that air cannot reach the lungs for a short period. This causes oxygen deprivation and repeated awakening from sleep. Together, nightly oxygen deprivation and the inability to achieve uninterrupted sleep contribute to an increased risk of developing high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Obstructive sleep apnea affects about 50% of adults in the U.S. and nearly 1 billion people worldwide.

[Read More and Learn About Clinical Trial Eligibility](#)

## Your Support Has Big Impact



Dr. Bailey’s clinical research story demonstrates the tremendous potential of the **Sarver Heart Center Investigator Awards Program**.

In this case, a graduate student’s innovative idea was fueled by a \$25,000 investigator award

made possible by forward-thinking donors who established an endowment to fund cardiovascular research pilot studies. From that, Dr. Bailey’s research team developed data to compete nationally to obtain a \$3.5 million, 5-year NIH grant to further clinical research that has the potential to help a billion people around the world. That’s a 140% return on investment.

Sarver Heart Center’s education of future cardiologists, advancement of patient care through science and clinical trials, and long-standing commitment to community outreach and education, are made possible because of support from readers - like you! Please consider a donation to support our mission as we work to innovate life-saving patient care.

*Photo: As a graduate student, Jennifer Vranish (left; now a PhD), did research on sleep apnea and breathing exercises in E. Fiona Bailey’s physiology lab.*

[Learn How To Give](#)

**Sarver Heart Center**  
1501 North Campbell Avenue

[Contact SHC Staff](#)

Tucson, Arizona 85724  
Phone: 520-626-2000  
Toll Free: 800-665-2328

