Burton Blatt Institute Hosts Seminar on Rheumatoid Arthritis

*Inspired by her aunt’s battle with the disease, Professor Rebecca Bader’s research focuses on improving the lives of those with RA*

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK – Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is the most common form of inflammatory arthritis, afflicting approximately one percent of the population and causing a significant financial and social burden. During a public seminar at noon, Feb. 1 in Crouse-Hinds 321, Rebecca Bader, assistant professor of biomedical and chemical engineering in the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science, will provide her expert insight into how a combination of old information and new technology can be used to increase the quality of life of those with RA.

Bader’s talk, “Old Concepts and News Insights in the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis,” is sponsored by the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) at Syracuse University. “The seminar is one of the ongoing opportunities for researchers affiliated with BBI to present on research relative to their area of expertise with impact for people with disabilities,” says Peter Blanck, BBI Chair and University Professor.

Bader’s research was inspired by her aunt’s 41-year battle with RA, an autoimmune disease that causes chronic inflammation of the joints. Along with the physical toll of RA, notes Bader, is the financial burden. “Medical costs have risen to almost $20,000 a year per patient, and nearly all patients develop some degree of functional disability, with nearly 50% too disabled to work 10 years after onset. The severe costs and consequences are due, in part, to a lack of understanding of disease pathology combined with ineffective treatment methods.”

Her seminar will begin with a historical perspective on the evolution of RA treatment methods, as well as an overview of the long-term outcomes in RA. A discussion session will focus on approaches used by her laboratory to improve the lives of those who suffer from RA.

In September, Bader was awarded her first National Science Foundation grant to research a drug delivery system that will minimize the negative effects of taking anti-rheumatic medications over a long time period. “My aunt is a daily reminder that no matter how bad things get, I am doing the research that I do for people like her who really need the help. Hopefully, someday people
with RA can forever continue to do the daily activities that most of us take for granted, and
hopefully I can help make that happen.”

**About the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) at Syracuse University**

BBI is dedicated to practical inclusive solutions for people with disabilities worldwide. With a
staff of more than 60 and offices in Syracuse, NY, Washington, DC, Atlanta, GA, New York,
NY, Los Angeles, CA, and Tel Aviv, Israel, BBI engages in projects on civil rights,
entrepreneurship, universal design, employment and economic advancement, technology
innovation, and attitudes about disability in traditional and new media. For more information,
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