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Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2020



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and updates on our programs*

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November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month so I thought it would be timely to update readers on the latest scientific discoveries about the disease. Despite steady progress on the research front, Alzheimer's dementia still afflicts approximately 10 percent of people 65 years or older and is second only to cancer as the most feared of diseases. It afflicts more than five million people in the U.S., and the number of Americans age 65 and older with Alzheimer's dementia is expected to grow to 13.8 million by 2050.

Many scientists are working to discover a disease-modifying therapy that would curtail the underlying disease process and have long-lasting effects. Unfortunately, none of these treatments have yet to succeed in clinical trials, although there is some recent progress on that front.

Most of the experimental disease-modifying treatments have targeted the accumulating brain amyloid plaques, which are one of the major neuropathological abnormalities that defines the disease. Prior attempts to eliminate these amyloid deposits have led to intolerable side effects from the treatment. Many of these novel therapies have been effective in decreasing concentrations of amyloid plaques observed on brain PET scans, but the treatments were not effective in reducing the disease's cognitive symptoms. Recent studies have tested passive immunotherapy infusions of a human monoclonal antibody called aducanumab. The cause for optimism for this approach stems from the drug's phase 3 studies, which include large numbers of subjects with either mild cognitive impairment or mild Alzheimer's dementia who were treated over 18 months. These studies were terminated early because of an interim analysis of the collected data at a certain point, which predicted that the phase 3 studies would miss their primary endpoints.

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Director's Letter Continued

Six months after that decision was made, however, additional analyses showed that the initial interim analysis was wrong. Subsequent analysis of a larger dataset showed that one of the studies had met its primary endpoint for patients on the highest dose (10 mg/kg) of the drug. As a result, plans were announced for an application to the U.S. FDA for regulatory approval. The FDA decision should be revealed within the next few months. If favorable, this would be the first disease modifying therapy that would be available to the many people suffering from the illness.

Another recent research report was not as encouraging about an alternative treatment strategy. Because people with diabetes have a higher risk for cognitive impairment as they age, investigators at Wake Forest School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, performed a placebo-controlled trial of intranasal insulin for treating mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's dementia. Insulin controls blood sugar levels by transporting sugar or glucose from the blood to the body's cells. It also crosses the blood-brain barrier and is involved in maintaining normal brain functions that control memory and cognition. Unfortunately, the study demonstrated no cognitive benefits after 12 months of treatment. The investigators thought that the inconsistent reliability of the insulin delivery devices used in the study may have contributed to the negative outcome, and they recommend further research using more effective delivery techniques. Since I began my scientific career at UCLA, I have observed some remarkable advances in diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. The progress on the research front is cause for hope that in the coming decades, we'll see some notable advances in the field.

As many of you know, I have recently made the difficult decision to retire from UCLA. It has been a

pleasure to work with so many brilliant and collaborative faculty and staff at UCLA, and I am grateful for the overwhelming support from my colleagues, Longevity Center Board Members, staff, trainees, and the many supporters of the Center and volunteers who have made our research efforts possible. Many of you have become more than just professional contacts but true friends, and I will miss you. I depart knowing that the Longevity Center is in good hands because Dr. Linda Ercoli, Director of Geriatric Psychology at UCLA, has agreed to serve as Interim Director. Many of you already know Linda, who has been involved in developing our memory education programs. I am confident that she will do a tremendous job in taking the Center to the next level.

I am following my own advice to remain active and engaged throughout life so I am not retiring from challenging endeavors, but taking on new ones. I will be accepting an exciting job opportunity as Chair of Psychiatry at Hackensack University Medical Center and Physician in Chief for Behavioral Health Services at Hackensack Meridian Health, the largest and most integrated health system in New Jersey. In these new roles, I plan to establish ongoing collaborations with my UCLA colleagues in research and educational initiatives and will certainly be back to visit whenever possible. In the meantime, I wish you all continued health and fulfillment and to keep living better longer.



Gary Small, M.D.
Director, UCLA Longevity Center

Senior Scholars Open House



By Andy Talajkowski, UCLA Longevity Center Staff Member

The UCLA Senior Scholars Program hosted its first virtual open house event for 185 potential scholars across the country on August 19, 2020. The event provided an overview of the program and the changes resulting from UCLA's online transition, while introducing new and exciting initiatives with UCLA professors and undergraduate students. Dr. Gary Small began the event with a lecture on the positive effects of lifelong learning on the brain. The mental challenge of continued education is correlated with improved memory ability and a lower risk of developing dementia. Dr. Small also noted how technology use can result in increased brain stimulation, an added benefit for Senior Scholars who are now attending courses online.

Andy Talajkowski, the Senior Scholars Coordinator, provided an overview of the program and the application process, and addressed UCLA's recent adoption of remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Senior Scholars now have the opportunity to audit classes online, and social programming for the program will continue to be held over Zoom. This not only allows Senior Scholars to continue learning in a safe environment,

but also broadens the program's reach to individuals in different parts of the state and country. Over the recent Summer Sessions, scholars attended UCLA lectures from San Francisco, Tennessee and New York.

Dr. Mitra Hooshmand, a Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology professor at UCLA, closed the event with a discussion of her experiences teaching Senior Scholars and the ongoing collaboration between the Senior Scholars Program and the undergraduate student group Dialogue Society.

As a firm believer in lifelong learning, Dr. Hooshmand welcomes the scholars into her lectures and encourages their involvement with the undergraduate students in her role as the faculty advisor for Dialogue Society. The undergraduate outreach group aims to educate the community through meaningful dialogues on healthy, purposeful and mindful living, and has been holding virtual social events and mentorship sessions for the Senior Scholars since Spring Quarter 2020. Dr. Hooshmand has also been hosting weekly health sessions focusing on aging, longevity and movement for the program.

The Open House was a success, and the online format allowed the Senior Scholars Program to reach a larger and more diverse crowd of participants than ever before. We look forward to seeing what the new online format will bring to the program.

Please visit our website to learn more about the Senior Scholars Program.

<https://www.semel.ucla.edu/longevity/senior-scholars-program-longevity-center>

A Meaningful Bruin Bridge: Dialogue Society and Senior Scholars



Dialogue Society

By Alara Aygen, Zenaz Sarkari, Misa Belser
Members of Dialogue Society

Guided by the belief that there is always a better version of oneself, Dialogue Society aims to enrich the lives of communities and embraces its motto: “Dialogue. Discover. Develop.” During the past year we have collaborated with various senior centers in Los Angeles. We have helped our seniors with technological difficulties, created social hours during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in partnership with the UCLA Senior Scholars Program, we have launched and participated in the Mentor Match program.

The Mentor Match Program connects undergraduate students of Dialogue Society with senior scholars who share similar areas of interest. The program invited our esteemed scholars to share their experiences and wisdom with our eager students as their mentors to pave the way for fruitful intergenerational connections.

We believe this program has been meaningful for both the students and the scholars. Every matched mentor and student pair was able to bond through conversations that allowed us to understand the backgrounds and perspectives that we all bring to

the table. Common discussion topics include career fields, individual hobbies, passions and pastimes.

Dialogue Society also hosted a series of weekly group meetings where Senior Scholars and UCLA undergraduate students were able to converse about their courses — everything from history to literature and political science. Below are testimonials about the wonderful journey of four of our members, Alara, Zenaz, Danika and Kevin.

“All these different events created a meaningful bridge between us and our community. Having these purposeful dialogues with our seniors helped me to grow as a person as I discovered new layers of my personality. What I liked the most about our sessions was that both parties could learn new things from each other. As we helped them out with modern technology, they broadened our perspectives with their experiences. This was especially accurate for the Mentor Match program, where we had the chance to talk about our shared interests, cultures, and field of studies. This enriched my knowledge about the aforementioned topics greatly. I feel like this program positively changed my life with its warm atmosphere, fulfilling goals and invaluable experiences.” – Alara

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A Meaningful Bruin Bridge Continued

“I chose to be in the Mentor Match program because I wanted to discover new perspectives and thoughts through conversations. I was able to connect with my mentor through discussions about immigration, our shared passion for social justice, and even on the future of Marvel movies. Since we were both taking classes during this program, we were able to exchange ideas and knowledge, creating a space for meaningful dialogue. Dialogue Society’s program allowed me to gain knowledge from my mentor even though we did not necessarily have the same career passions. It was all about reaching out of your comfort zone! Mentor Match was also a chance for me to explore other interests and share my life experiences with my mentor. The experience has been so wonderful as I have truly taken the lessons that I have learned and will hopefully be able to apply them to my life as I continue to pursue my passions.” – Zenaz

“I really loved my experience with the Mentor Match program. It was fascinating being able to talk to someone older than me with countless insights on the world that only comes with experience. Throughout my conversations with Jason, my mentor, I was able to learn a lot about real estate, block chain, and got valuable insight into the field of computer science. Overall, I was able to gain understanding about various things that I was interested in, but normally wouldn’t have learned about until I was much older. At the end of the day, the program was very rewarding as it was great to make a new connection and learn while doing so.” – Kevin

“I enjoyed participating in this program as I was able to connect to a lovely senior scholar and learn about her life experiences while bonding over our common interests. During a difficult time with OVID, I was glad to take part in our social

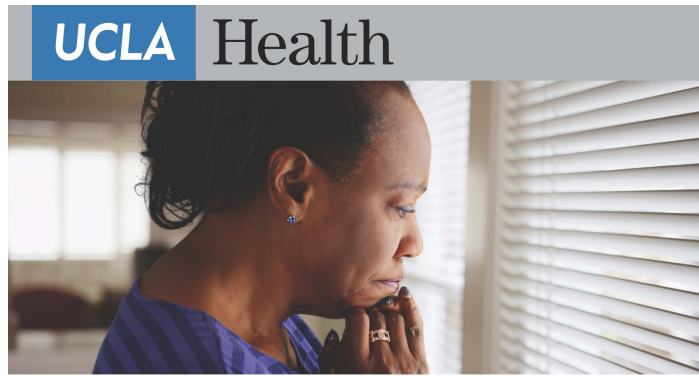


activities and discussions. The program was meaningful to me and to my mentor as we talked about everything from her garden to global health.” – Danika

We intend to continue developing our program, our goals and, as a result, ourselves to better connect with our community. As we work towards our new goals, our program advisor, Dr. Mitra Hooshmand, continues to host weekly sessions about mindful living and encourages a healthier lifestyle through topics such as healthy aging, neuroscience of sleep, yoga and mindfulness classes. Dr. Mitra Hooshmand is a neuroscientist, stem cell advocate, and lecturer for the Department of Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology at UCLA.

In Fall 2020, we plan to hold discussion-based sessions. Our first session is entitled “The Art of Connecting,” where we will explore the importance of social connection. As our socials will continue into fall quarter, we hope to have many enjoyable, interesting and informative sessions with our senior participants. To learn more about our activities please visit our website at dialoguesociety.us or follow our Instagram @dialogue_soc. We look forward to connecting with you.

Research Studies & Support Groups



Depression is treatable.

Are you 60 or older?

If you're taking an antidepressant and you still have symptoms of depression, you may be eligible for **Optimum**.

ABOUT OPTIMUM

Optimum is a research study aimed at finding out which antidepressant medications are most effective for adults ages 60 and older.

CONTACT US

Call (310) 206-5240 to see if you are eligible.

Learn more online at www.optimumstudy.org
or email us at LateLifeWellness@mednet.ucla.edu.



St. Louis | New York City | Los Angeles | Pittsburgh | Toronto
Protocol ID: IRB#17-001218 UCLA IRB Approved Approval Date: 8/11/2020 Through: 3/25/2021 Committee: Medical IRB 3

OPTIMIZAR SU TRATAMIENTO PARA LA DEPRESIÓN

PREGUNTE A SU DOCTOR SOBRE EL ESTUDIO OPTIMUM

OPTIMUM es un estudio de investigación para pacientes de **60 años o más** con **depresión** difícil de tratar.

- Los participantes elegibles son asignados al azar a opciones de medicamentos:

PASO 1: (durante 10 semanas) Añadir aripiprazole o bupropion al antidepresivo actual; o cambiar a bupropion

PASO 2: (durante 10 semanas) Adición de litio al antidepresivo actual; o cambiar a nortriptyline

- El equipo del estudio evaluará sus efectos secundarios y su estado de ánimo por teléfono cada dos semanas.
- Psiquiatras geriátricos del estudio proporcionarán recomendaciones de medicamentos a su médico de atención primaria.

Usted puede ser elegible si...

- Tiene 60 años o más
- Está deprimido
- Está tomando un antidepresivo, pero no se siente mejor

Pregúntele a su doctor si califica.

Para más información:

310-206-5240

LateLifeWellness@mednet.ucla.edu

Protocol ID: IRB#17-001218 UCLA IRB Approved Approval Date: 4/1/2020 Through: 3/25/2021 Committee: Medical IRB 3

Coping with Dementia Research Study

Group Education & Counseling for Patients and their Adult Children Caregivers

Subjects will be compensated for their participation



- ◆ Feasibility study of an intervention to improve quality of life for patients and reduce caregiver stress.
- ◆ Total participation will be for 5 weeks.
- ◆ Provides education and support to understand the diagnosis and adjust to life changes.
- ◆ Patients must be able to participate in group discussions.

Topics Discussed

Understanding the diagnosis

Improving communication

Resources for help with memory loss and caregiving

Preparing for the future: advanced directives, changes in care needs

Improving quality of life and adapting to limitations



For more information please contact:
(310) 267-5144

Protocol ID: IRB#19-001184 UCLA IRB Approved Approval Date: 8/27/2019 Committee: Medical IRB 3

Brain Health in Breast Cancer Survivorship Study

Are you taking a hormone therapy for breast cancer ?

(i.e., Tamoxifen, Arimidex)



Or are you a woman interested in being a healthy control for a breast cancer study?



Purpose of the study

We are interested in understanding if common estrogen-related treatments for breast cancer alter cognitive or brain function, and whether there may be different effects in pre-menopausal or post-menopausal women.

What is involved?

This study will involve a one-day visit, ~4.5 hours:

- An MRI scan of the brain
- A cognitive assessment and other questionnaires
- A blood draw to examine some signs of aging

Project Highlights

- ❖ You will receive \$200 for participating as well as a parking pass.
- ❖ You will ALSO receive a research summary of your cognitive test results and a picture of your brain
- ❖ About 120 women from Southern California will take part in this study. Funding has provided by the National Cancer Institute

To find out more about the study:

(310) 825-8761

bhbc@mednet.ucla.edu

www.brainhealthbcs.info

Protocol ID: IRB#19-001004 UCLA IRB Approved Approval Date: 2/13/2020 Committee: Medical IRB 3

Research Updates

Taking Care of Your Heart Will Protect Your Brain

A recent study published in the journal *Neurology* confirmed the old adage that what's good for your heart is good for your brain. Scientists analyzed data from more than 1200 research subjects who participated in the Framingham Heart Study and found that those who were carriers of the APOE-4 genetic risk for Alzheimer's disease had a two-fold greater risk for developing dementia than volunteers who did not have that genetic risk. When the investigators looked at variables that contribute to heart health, they learned that volunteers with a favorable heart health score had more than a 50 percent lower risk for developing dementia. The variables that contributed to the heart health risk included physical activity levels, cholesterol control, healthy diet, normal blood pressure, normal body weight and blood sugar levels, and not smoking. These findings support the recommendation to adopt a heart healthy lifestyle to protect brain health.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment for Cognitive Health

Normal brain function requires sufficient circulation to bring oxygen and nutrients to nourish brain cells and support their function. For many years, scientists have hypothesized that delivering more oxygen to the brain might offset cognitive losses, but the strategy has not been effective in the past. However, a new study suggests that this approach may have some merit. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy heightens the supply of oxygen to the body's cells. The treatment involves breathing pure oxygen in a pressurized room or tube and has been used to treat decompression sickness, a hazard of scuba diving, as well as serious infections and wounds that won't heal as a result of diabetes or radiation injury. In this recent investigation, scientists recruited patients

with Alzheimer's dementia or mild cognitive impairment and treated them with 40 minutes of hyperbaric oxygen each day for a total of 20 days. They found that this single course of hyperbaric oxygen treatment improved cognitive abilities in both the patients with Alzheimer's disease and mild cognitive impairment after one and three months of follow up. Confirmation of these results are needed in a larger study sample, but the findings suggest that hyperbaric oxygen therapy offers promise as an innovative strategy for improving cognition in such patients.

U.S. Mental Health Worsening During Pandemic

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported in its publication, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, that mental symptoms are on the rise in the U.S. in association with the Covid-19 pandemic. During the last week of June 2020, there were three to four times more symptoms of mental disorders compared with the rates reported during the second quarter of 2019. This survey, which included more than 5,000 adults, found a prevalence for anxiety disorder symptoms of 26 percent during June 2020 compared with 8 percent in 2019. For depressive disorder symptoms, the 2020 prevalence was 24 percent compared with 7 percent in 2019. An estimated one out of every four 2020 respondents reported symptoms of trauma and stress-related disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder, which were related to the pandemic crisis. Another concern is suicidal risk during the pandemic. The percentage of 2020 respondents reporting serious suicidal thoughts was significantly higher among those aged 18 to 24 years, members of minority/racial ethnic groups, self-reported unpaid adult caregivers, and essential workers.

Retirement Announcement

ABOUT SHERRIE GOLDFARB



By Sherrie Goldfarb

I started volunteering as a Memory Trainer in 2003 when the Longevity Center was known as the Center on Aging. I loved teaching the memory techniques and hearing participants say how much better they felt about their memory after the first week of class. Working as part of a team was wonderful. A bonus was learning something new each time I taught the class.

I became a staff member in 2008 overseeing the Memory Training program. As time went on, I oversaw other programs (Brain Boosters and Memory Care). Working at the Center was a dream come true. I found a third career that fit perfectly into my life and gave me a chance to share what I learned as the child of parents with Alzheimer's. I loved going to work. I was part of an incredible team with the goal of helping people "live better longer." I was learning and stimulating different parts of my brain. What more could anyone ask for in a job?

My special thanks to the team at the Longevity Center: Drs Gary Small, Karen Miller, Linda Ercoli,

Angela Huntsman, and Kathleen Van Dyk, as well as Chay Zhu, Christina Domer, Patricia Ramos, Andy Talajkowski, Nazelie Hagopian-Navarro, Aurelio Navarro, Ernie Vasquez, and the Longevity Center Board of Directors. Working with all of you gave me the opportunity to learn new things and to grow. You were supportive, encouraging, kind and helpful.

It was an honor to work with the Memory Care participants and their families, the memory trainers and participants, community partners, graduate students, volunteers and members of the public who were looking for information on how to improve their memory or how to deal with a loved one or a friend with memory impairment. My experiences with all of you made me a better person.

I met so many wonderful people through my job as a program representative, and I am thankful for the time I spent with all of you. It was my privilege to have worked with you. To the Center's Memory Trainers, a special thank you for the years of friendship and for being such wonderful representatives of the Longevity Center.

I couldn't have done this job without all of you. I didn't think about retiring, but there comes a time when it is the right time. My new "job" is to spend time with my grandson as his parents are working from home. I love watching him explore his world. I'm also looking forward to trying new things like tai chi, pickle ball, learning to play the ukulele and learning French. I hope to also do some traveling when the time is right.

I hope our paths will cross again. My life is richer because of the wonderful experiences I had at the Longevity Center. Take good care, keep active and learn something new.

UCLA Longevity Center Donations & Tributes

(February 2020– September 2020)

Donations

Director's Circle

Louise Horvitz
 Alan Cole-Ford
 Joel Saltzburg
 Janet Kerr
 Patricia Will
 Lidia Epelbaum
 Elizabeth Barbatelli
 Warren Lieberfarb
 Ken Ruby

Associate Level

Lisa Raufman

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Barbara Ludwig Katzman
 John Mintz
 Allan Tarlow

Supporter Level

Anthony Boyd
 Margaret McGinley-Ingraffia
 Millie Monson
 Jason Dr. Kogan
 Arlene Patton

Tributes

In Memory of

Lillian

Margulies

Patricia Margulies

In Memory of Marlene

J. Miller

Arlene Patton

Longevity Center Staff &
 Faculty

In Memory of Alex

Suriano

Joanne Suriano

Valencia

To donate to the UCLA Longevity Center, please visit:

<https://giving.ucla.edu/LongevityCenter>

OR

Make a check out to:

UCLA Foundation Fund #601070

Mailing Address: UCLA Foundation

PO Box 7145

Pasadena, CA 91109-9903

Longevity Center Programs

Brain Boot Camp

An intensive, three-hour course that includes individualized healthy lifestyle programs, tips for a healthy heart and brain diet, and advanced memory techniques for learning and recalling names and faces. For more information, contact (310) 206-1675.

Brain Booster

Boost your brain with our 90 minute cognitive sessions. Led by our team of experts, presenters will provide information on healthy aging research and exercises that enhance overall cognitive function. For more information, contact (310) 794-0680.

Memory Care

Memory Care is a weekly, 3-hour program for memory-challenged, middle-aged people (age 65 and younger) and their loved ones. It teaches memory techniques and strategies to lower stress and stimulate the mind and the body and offers support for people with memory challenges and their caregivers. For more information, contact (310) 794-0680.

Memory Training

A course for people with mild memory concerns. Memory Training presents effective memory-enhancing techniques and is taught by certified volunteer trainers. For more information, contact (310) 794-0680.

Memory Lifestyle Program

The Memory Lifestyle Program is designed to benefit a range of clients, from those who are looking for ways to reduce their risk for developing memory problems to those who have more serious concerns about their memory. The program is tailored to each client's needs and lifestyle, empowering and educating them to optimize their brain health as they age. This comprehensive program addresses medical as well as lifestyle factors (e.g., diet, exercise, stress) that impacts brain health. For more information, contact (310) 206-1675.

Senior Scholars

A program for adults 50 years of age or older to audit UCLA undergraduate courses taught by UCLA's distinguished professors. For more information, contact (310) 794-0679.

Winter Quarter begins January 4, 2021.
Registration opens December 4, 2020.

UCLA Longevity Center Newsletter

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