

The HBEC encourages older African Americans to participate in research with the goal of addressing health disparities

SPRING 2023

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Research is critical to understanding why African Americans are at much higher risk of developing certain diseases, and why these diseases have a greater impact on their health and longevity.

If you agree to be part of the Participant Resource Pool (PRP), we guarantee that:

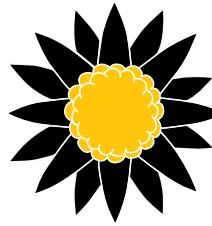
The research projects meet the highest quality federal, state and university standards.

- *Your information will be handled with the strictest confidence.*

- *You will be considered for research that is of interest to you.*

- *You have the right to decline a research project for any reason at any time.*

If interested, contact Vanessa Rorai, HBEC Program Coordinator and editor of this publication at 313-664-2604.



HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER

Connecting Older Adults to Research



RESEARCH
STUDY
SPOTLIGHT



Black Elders and Voice Technologies

An innovative study in 2022 used the HBEC research registry to better understand how to design conversational and speech technologies for Black older adults. Prior research suggests current voice technology interactions are not equitable for non-White individuals. Voice technologies refers to computers recognizing human speech to perform tasks, such as a Google Home turning on smart lights, or searching information, such as the Apple device Siri providing the weather forecast. This project sought to uncover pain points that older adults experience when interacting with voice technologies, define values toward fair and equitable AI technologies, and envision future voice assistant product design.

The study was led by Drs. Robin Brewer (University of Michigan, School of Information), Christina

Harrington (Carnegie Mellon University, School of Computer Science) and Courtney Heldreth (User Design Researcher at Google). Five HBEC Community Advisory Board members collaborated with the researchers to determine study design, location, and review the results. Sixteen HBEC members participated in the four in-person workshops at the Google Detroit office and completed follow-up telephone interviews. Participants answered questions about challenges, successes, and expectations regarding use of voice technologies.

Participants said that voice technologies do not sufficiently account for cultural or regional relevance of information (e.g., Belle Isle, Juneteenth), nor do they reflect their Black identity in the types of voices used. Participants

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Get Physical!

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Clinical Psychology
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Wayne State
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Physical activity plays an essential role in healthy aging and fosters many areas of well-being. Being physically active can help prevent health problems that become more common with age. It can help manage diseases like diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease. It can strengthen your muscles, reduce the risk of illness, and help improve balance to prevent falls. Physical activity is also associated with better mental health and can reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Physical activity is good for your brain health as well. Many people may notice changes in their thinking skills, such as memory and attention, as they age. Staying active can help reduce declines in these abilities. Studies have shown that physical activity can reduce the risk of cognitive decline, especially in individuals at increased genetic risk of Alzheimer's disease. At-risk adults who engaged in physical activity had a reduced risk of cog-

nitive decline compared to at-risk individuals who did not engage in physical activity. Physical activity has also been shown to reduce shrinkage of brain regions critical to memory.

Any physical activity is better than no physical activity, but there are recommendations unique to specific age groups. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults 65 and older need to perform the following:

- At least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activities (like brisk walking) or 75 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity activities (like hiking, jogging, or running).
- Exercises that work to strengthen muscles at least two days per week.
- Exercises that develop balance at least three days each week, like balancing on one foot.

Individuals with chronic health conditions should understand how their health can impact their ability to safely engage in regular physical activity. Speak with your doctor if you have any concerns about your ability to be physically active. Once your physician gives the all clear, get moving!

Study from page 1

commented on the inclusivity of voice technologies as needing to know about their gender and cultural sayings. For example, voice technologies should know that "sugar" refers to diabetes and not a cooking ingredient.

These findings highlight current

challenges that Black older adults experience when using voice technologies and indicate that these technologies could be useful tools for older adults as many use them daily. However, several participants experienced barriers to their anticipated search results. Much of what the researchers found speaks to the need for better au-


National Institute on Aging

Five Tips to Help You Stay Motivated to Exercise



Find ways to fit exercise into your day.



Do activities you enjoy to make it more fun.



Make it social for emotional support.



If there's a break in your routine, get back on track. Start slowly and gradually build back up.



Keep track of your progress.

Find more info at:
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/staying-motivated-exercise-tips-older-adults>

tomated speech recognition that understands the complex facets of someone's identity like ethnicity or gender.

The study team is continuing to analyze and synthesize the data to publish a paper about their findings. They will present their findings at the March Lunch & Learn (see page 5 for details).

Stop, Thief! Protect Yourself from Identity Theft

by LaToya Hall, SAFE Director



Identity theft is a horrible crime that can ruin your credit and finances. Identity theft occurs when a criminal uses your personal information, such as your Social Security number, to open credit accounts and/or obtain goods and services.

There are four main pieces of information an identity thief needs to assume your identity:

- Full Name
- Social Security Number
- Mother's Maiden Name
- Date of Birth

Three of these are very easy to obtain, so please protect your Social Security number at all costs. Do not carry Social Security cards or share your Social Security number unless you have verified it's legitimate and absolutely necessary.

Identity thieves have numerous ways to obtain an individual's information. Some of the most common are phishing and dumpster diving. Phishing occurs when you get a phone call, email, or other form of direct communication asking you for personal information to verify your identity. Once you share this information it will be used to access existing accounts or open new credit accounts. Dumpster diving happens when you throw out mail or other documents with important personal information (like a Social Security number) on them without shredding or destroying them first.

Some warning signs you might be a victim of identity theft:

- Debt collectors begin to contact you about invalid debts
- You are denied services or utilities because you owe balances on unfamiliar accounts
- You find unfamiliar accounts on your credit report
- You are notified your information has been compromised in a data breach

If you notice any of these signs, you should immediately take action. First, you should order your free credit report from www.annualcreditreport.com for review and place a fraud alert on

your credit file. Then, if you notice unfamiliar accounts on your credit report, you should contact all companies that you found to be holding fraudulent accounts, have the accounts closed or suspended and find out all of the information about the account (i.e. date opened, account balance, etc.) and the company's process for addressing fraud. File a police report and complete an identity theft report with the FTC at IdentityTheft.gov.

Finally, be sure to complete all of the steps in the fraud resolution process to have the accounts closed and removed from your credit report.

Need some assistance?

The **SAFE** program offers **no cost, one-on-one support** to those attempting to resolve identity theft. If you find yourself victimized, please contact LaToya Hall at

313-664-2608

SAFE CAN HELP YOU:

1. Report scams and identity theft to proper channels.
2. Pull and review credit reports.
3. Submit fraud complaints to close fraudulent accounts and remove negative items from credit reports breached by identity theft.
4. Negotiate payments or settlements with creditors.
5. Complete cost-of-living budgets.
6. Address consumer credit issues.
7. Understand financial communications from businesses, creditors, etc.
8. Add fraud alerts to the major credit bureaus.
9. Contact companies to sort out miscommunications or confusion about financial matters.
10. Draft financial plans and work toward financial goals.



The 70 Over 70 Next Chapter Awards, presented by Hannan Center, honors exceptional older adults who prove impact is ageless. Four HBEC CAB members were nominated and won in their respective categories, and awarded at the October 2022 ceremony. Pictured from left: **James Bridgforth (Civic and Community Leadership)**, Dr. Tam Perry, **Henry Swift (Entrepreneurship and Impact Award)**, Vanessa Rorai, **JoAnn Smith (Unsung Hero)**, **Wilma Stringer (Lifelong Learner)** and Sarah Whitney.



Critical Crossroads was created by HBEC Community Advisory Board members to engage in community conversations, advocacy, and strategies around issues of social injustice.

In Praise of Ignorance

by Wilma Stringer, HBEC CAB Member

"Education is the progressive discovery of our own ignorance.

Will Durant (1885 – 1981)

In our society, ignorance and stupidity are used synonymously. That is unfortunate because they are different. Ignorance is simply not knowing and can be cured with education. Unfortunately, as the 18th century German playwright Friedrich Schiller wrote, “against stupidity the gods themselves contend in vain.”

Embracing our own ignorance can be the first step to embracing learning as a lifelong endeavor. Lifelong because the skills and intellectual tools that serve in one phase of life may be unsuited to another and being willing to update our skills and knowledge can pay personal and financial divi-

dends. Learning new things places us in a position to learn other new things. Understandably, we may feel that going back to school would be too difficult or simply impossible. How would we interact with people young enough to be our grandchildren or great-grandchildren? The chasm can seem so wide. However, if we can give younger people the chance, we may find them curious about us.

Many colleges and universities have specific programs for older learners returning to school, often at reduced cost or free. The world is changing rapidly. How society is organized and for what purposes continues to evolve. As an example, the proliferation of artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, robotics, and ever more sophisticated biotechnology, makes it imperative that citizens have a basic understanding of the concepts underpinning these technologies if we are to have a voice in their continuing deployment.



Lunch & Learns

If you have any questions,
contact us at
313-664-2616



We have returned to our in-person format!

In-person events start at 11:00 am and end at 1:00 pm

FREE lunch • Space is limited

**You must RVSP to attend at
313-664-2616**

Leave a voice message with your:

1. Name
2. Phone number
3. Lunch & Learn title

**You will receive a confirmation call
after registration**

Wednesday, March 22, 11 am - 1 pm

Older Adults and Technology Use: The Google Study

Franklin Wright Settlements

3360 Charlevoix, Detroit, MI 48207

New technology is increasingly becoming part of our daily lives. Join us for a presentation from **Dr. Robin Brewer** and **Dr. Christina Harrington** on their study looking at how older adults interact with technology and how older adults want technology to interact with them.

Thursday, April 20, 11 am - 1 pm

Spiritual Self-Care

Fellowship Chapel

7707 Outer Dr W, Detroit, MI 48235

Join us for a talk with **Rev. Dr. Samuel White, III**. Dr. White is the author of *Aging Gracefully: Spiritual Care for Aging Adults*. His book provides the spiritual knowledge, practical information, and coping skills to help older adults address their needs as they age. He will provide his observations and recommendations for ways to engage in spiritual self-care.

Thursday, June 22, 11 am - 1 pm

The Benefits of Yoga for Older Adults

Palmer Park

910 Merrill Plaisance St, Detroit, MI 48203

Changes in memory, balance and energy can all come with aging. Yoga teaches us how to balance, breathe, stretch and work with our bodies as they change. A consistent yoga practice can offer low-impact cardiovascular exercise without putting too much strain on the heart or joints. **Join Kerrie Trahan**, the founder of Yoganic Flow, will show how yoga can improve your overall health -- followed by a yoga class.

**Virtual Event:
Join us by phone or computer!**

Thursday, May 18, 11 am-12:30 pm

The Impact of Ageism

When we encounter ageism in our daily lives, it can be frustrating and sometimes even harmful. Did you know it could even have an impact on your overall health? Join us for a conversation with **Dr. Julie Ober Allen** on the effects of ageism on your health and wellness.

TO JOIN BY TELEPHONE AT:

1-312-626-6799 and provide ID #:
954 9577 4535 when requested.

TO JOIN BY COMPUTER

type this link: <https://bit.ly/hbelunch>
into your internet browser.

If you would like a reminder before the event, please call us at 1-313-664-2616 and leave

a voicemail with your:

- Name & Phone number
- Lunch & Learn title
- How you are attending (by phone or computer)

Research Studies Looking for Participants

The following list contains studies looking for participants. All have been reviewed and approved by the HBEC Community Advisory Board

Supporting Caregivers of People with Dementia

Family caregivers are needed for a study that can be completed at home, online or in person at Wayne State University. Participants will be asked to participate in up to 3-4 focus groups or interviews. Each focus group or interview will last approximately 1-2 hours for a total time commitment of 4-8 hours. All participants will receive a gift card.

Contact

Rosanne DiZazzo-Miller at
ar7975@wayne.edu or
 313-993-3970

SWELCare Study

We're seeking volunteers who are Black or White living with and helping a family member or friend who has Alzheimer's or a related dementia. Participants must be Michigan residents. Participation for the family member/friend includes a phone interview (1.5 to 2 hours), a training session by phone or Zoom (1.5 to 2 hours) and completing daily life assessments for 5 days. Participation for the person living with dementia includes completing a memory screener (10-12 minutes), a training session by phone or Zoom (20 minutes) and wearing one heart monitor on the chest for 5 days.

Contact the team at
swelcarestudy@umich.edu or
 734-936-7489.

Age and Alzheimer's Disease Risk-Related Performance on Coordination, Magnitude, and Temporal Relational Framing Tasks

This project examines how people learn new relationships between concepts not previously taught. Participants are asked to complete a survey online and work with a researcher over Zoom to complete different cognitive tasks. Participants must be aged 65-89 and have access to a computer. The study is a one-time visit that lasts up to one hour.

Contact Jessica Katschke at
gh9613@wayne.edu or
 313-577-9260

Community-based Approach to Early Identification of Transitions to Mild Cognitive Impairment and Alzheimer's Disease in African Americans

This research seeks to improve the way we diagnose Alzheimer's Disease in Black and African American adults by using electroencephalogram (EEG) and computerized assessment. We are conducting phone-only screenings to identify eligibility for the study. Must be Black or African American and 65+ years old (among other criteria). Those who complete the in-person visits will be compensated.

Contact the
 ELECTRA Study Team at
ELECTRA@wayne.edu or
 313-577-1692.

The WALLET Study

People who experience a decline in memory or thinking skills may unknowingly also experience a decline in taking care of their finances. This study will review the past 12 months of your bank statements and administer some psychological and cognitive tests. Looking for English-speaking adults aged 60 or older. Study completed by telephone. Participants will be compensated.

Contact Vanessa Rorai at
vrorai@wayne.edu or
 313-664-2604.

Measuring Dementia Caregiving Styles

The goal of our study is to develop a questionnaire that can quickly understand how caregivers are approaching dementia related care and use this information to tailor supports and services to each caregiver's unique needs. Looking for unpaid caregivers currently providing some form of physical assistance, emotional support, or financial assistance for a family member or friend who has a doctor's diagnosis of an age-related dementia. Participation involves a 75-minute survey with the option to complete a 20-minute follow-up survey.

Contact
sophia.tsuker@wayne.edu or call
 313-355-3557.

The Heart of Detroit Study

This project aims to investigate the connections between daily social environments, life experiences, and cardiovascular health among African American adults living in the Detroit area. You might be eligible if you are between 55-75 years old and reside in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb counties.

To learn more, please call
313-577-3334.

The WISDOM Study

This study is working to improve breast cancer detection and prevention for all women. Participants have the option to learn their genetic risk of getting breast cancer, receive recommendations for when and how often to get screened, and learn strategies to reduce their breast cancer risk. Participation takes less than one hour a year and can be done

almost entirely online. Looking for women aged 40 to 74 who have never had breast cancer.

Sign up or learn more at www.thewisdomstudy.org; email questions to info@wisdomstudy.org or call 855-729-2844.

Enhancing Digital CBT-I to Improve Adherence and Reduce Disparities

This project seeks to understand how different people interact with internet-based treatment for insomnia. We are looking to see how we can improve adherence to the program. This study lasts 8 weeks and requires participants to go through 20-minute weekly sessions of digital therapy for insomnia. Participants will have an initial call with the research team to set up their account for insomnia therapy. Participants may also be selected to have an exit interview.

Looking for those aged 18+ who have difficulty sleeping or insomnia.

Contact the team at dmeliky1@hhs.org or call 248-344-7366.

Empower@Home

This project seeks volunteers to try an online interactive educational program. This new program, called Empower@Home, could lift your spirits and make you feel happier and more connected. Participants will try the program for up to 10 weeks, answer three surveys, and get paid up to \$100 for participation. No prior computer experience is required. Tablet and internet will be provided for free as needed. No cost and no travel are needed for participation.

Contact the team at empower-at-home@umich.edu or 734-215-5654.



HBEC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

95-years-young Juanita Collins

By Adelia Cooley
HBEC CAB and Staff Member

"Aging is not bad, you just got to keep moving," says Mrs. Collins, and she is a lady living by her own words. She is continuously exercising and moving around, inside and out of her home. This past summer, while out on the beach in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, she said, "What an enjoyable time I had walking in the water, and all that sand felt so good."

Born in October 1927, in Mississippi, Mrs. Collins moved to Detroit after graduating from high school. She obtained employment with the United States Postal Service where she remained for 40 years until her retirement.

At 95, Mrs. Collins does everything for herself except cooking and only a limited amount of cleaning. Her daughter Beverly said, "My three siblings and I just check and make certain she is taking care of herself. My mother is



the most caring, quiet, thoughtful, patient, kind, person I know." What a beautiful compliment from a daughter about her young ageless mother!



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HBEC SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER

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SPRING 2023



CAB Critical
ROADS

In-person Lunch & Learns!

The Healthier Black Elders Center (HBEC) is part of the Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University, Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research: A National Institute on Aging Grant

Party Line

A Social Group for Older Detroiters
Join us by phone or computer

Join us for stories, games,
and good conversation every
Tuesday from 1pm-2pm

Dates:
Nowthrough June 27, 2023



Dial In: 1-646-876-9923
Meeting ID: 952 2204 2553
Password: 8787

Zoom Link: <https://bit.ly/hbepartyline>