

transitions

INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY

Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond

Winter 2009

Two-Year Grant Studies Costs and Effects of Prescription Drug Use

A \$370,000 grant will fund a new two-year research project to analyze the effects of non-adherence to prescribed drug regimens on the health and healthcare costs of older adults. IOG faculty member, Dr. Gail Jensen will head the study with Dr. Xiao Xu of the University of Michigan.

"This is the first study to examine both the costs and health outcomes of non-adherence," said Dr. Jensen. "It is conceivable, particularly for seniors with chronic health conditions, that



a high level of medication adherence actually results in a net reduction in total healthcare costs. This study will investigate the evidence for this." Drs. Jensen and Xu hope their results can eventually inform future government policy on such tangible benefits of drug coverage.

Prescription drug expenses are one of the fastest growing categories of health care expenditures in the U.S. Until recently, a third of all Medicare seniors lacked prescription drug insurance altogether. The cost-sharing burden on older adults continues to increase for many persons who have private insurance, and even for subscribers to some of the newer Part D drug plans. The specific aims of this study are:

1. To measure the effects of drug insurance on medication adherence, health outcomes and the costs of medical care.
2. To examine differences in the effects of drug insurance for older adults with and without chronic health conditions.
3. To chart how the beneficial health effects of adherence to medications unfold over time.

"Little is known about whether seniors skip doses of their medications or restrict their use

"Little is known about whether seniors skip doses of their medications or restrict their use of drugs when their insurance is limited..."

- Dr. Jensen

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IOG volunteer Amy Jackson addresses a large gathering of residents of the Westland Presbyterian Villages of Michigan to inspire them to keep their brains and bodies active. The free forum was part of the IOG's speakers' bureau outreach program.

research
education
outreach
partnerships



Special State Tribute Honors Dementia Work

Dr. Peter Lichtenberg received a special tribute and citation from Gov. Jennifer Granholm for his 10 years of exceptional service to the Michigan Dementia Coalition and to the health and well-being of others, especially older adults. The tribute was delivered at the recent announcement of the coalition's strategic plan for 2009-2011. Dr. Lichtenberg co-chaired this ambitious three-year plan as well as the group's previous strategy.

"It is gratifying to know that our state leaders understand and appreciate the impact of dementia," Dr. Lichtenberg said, "and the need to make diagnosis and treatment available to everyone."

As chair of the Michigan Dementia Coalition since 1999, Dr. Lichtenberg has expanded membership, increased statewide collaborations, and developed a statewide needs assess-



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- Dr. Lichtenberg

ment and strategic plan for the treatment of dementia. The new three-year objectives are: to increase support for family members of persons with dementia, to promote best practices in detecting dementia, to advocate for dementia-friendly policies and the highest standards of care,

and to increase early intervention and support for persons with dementia and their caregivers.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect approximately 240,000 individuals in Michigan, and more than 5 million persons in the United States.

Alum Jason Allaire Establishes Cognitive Research Laboratory

Welcome to Transitions' newest feature, Alumni Spotlight, where we celebrate the achievements of the IOG's former students. We will update readers about alumni whereabouts and encourage current students to form support networks with alums.



Dr. Jason Allaire (2001) hasn't looked back since graduating from Wayne State and finishing his pre-doctoral training at the IOG. In 2001 he did a post-doctoral fellowship at Penn State University's Gerontology Center. In 2003, he joined North Carolina State in a tenure-track position in the Department of Psychology. Funding from the National Institute on Aging has allowed him to establish a "Cognitive Aging in Context" laboratory at NCSU where he conducts research on everyday cognition, and patterns of cognitive aging and health in older African Americans.

In January, Dr. Allaire returned to the IOG to present his research at a colloquium filled to standing-room only with students, IOG faculty, and community guests. He can be reached through his laboratory website: <http://www4.ncsu.edu/~jcallair/allaire.htm>

IOG Mental Health Training Broadens Its Audience

The IOG received a \$50,000 grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation and the Retirement Research Foundation to revise and enhance the SAGE training DVDs it created last year for occupational therapists. The new edition will target a broader base of healthcare professionals to train them about mental health issues prominent among older adults. Dr. Lichtenberg is the principal investigator on the grant.

Enhancements will address the specific needs of various healthcare staff as they learn to identify mental health issues such as depression, dementia and substance abuse in their older adult patients. The current SAGE training has been extremely well received among occupational therapists. It qualifies for continuing education credits, is copyright protected and is now being distributed directly through the American Occupational Therapist Association. "We know that the new edition will be equally relevant," Dr. Lichtenberg said. "The need for accurate, research-based training specific to the older adult is large and growing."

AWARDS & PUBLICATIONS

IOG student **Awantika Deshmukh**, former post-doctoral fellows **Drs. Karen Rodrigue** and **Kristen Kennedy** (now at the Center for Brain Health at the University of Texas), and faculty member



Dr. Naftali Raz shared authorship of the article, "Synergistic effects of the MTHFR C677T polymorphism and hypertension on spatial navigation," in *Biological Psychology*, vol. 16, 2008.



Pre-doctoral student **Brooke Schneider** will head to the Pacific Coast this August to do her clinical internship at the *West Los Angeles VA Healthcare Center*. Competition for this intern-

ship was strong: 200 graduate students applied for only seven positions. Brooke will work with older veterans who are having cognitive problems, seeking psychotherapy, or dealing with neurological issues such as traumatic brain injury, HIV dementia or seizures. "This was my first choice for an internship," said Brooke, who hopes to re-connect with former IOG student Dr. Paul Cernin, now in his second year of post-doctoral studies at UCLA.

Heather Moilanen-Miller was awarded scholarship funding by Wayne State to attend a two-week interdisciplinary course and study trip in Dubrovnik, Croatia, this spring. The course focuses



on ethnic conflict and cooperation within states and on the effects of globalization, with special attention to the problems of the former Yugoslavia. Heather is currently a doctoral candidate in anthropology at Wayne State and the project director for an IOG research project on hip fracture, working with **Drs. Luborsky and Lysack**. "This is an excellent opportunity to learn about cooperation and conflict in this area of the world," Heather said. "It will expand my scholarly knowledge and open me up to new avenues of research for the future."

SENIORS COUNT!

A Truer Tally of Older Adult Demographics

The IOG and Adult Well-Being Services is sharing a \$275,000 grant to conduct a two-year pilot program entitled, *Seniors Count!* The project will collect data about senior demographics from a wide variety of sources, then organize and analyze it to create a comprehensive database about southeast Michigan's growing senior population.

The IOG and Adult Well-Being Services, a local non-profit service agency, recently began work on the first phase of this two-phase study. "Our goal is to paint a complete and accurate picture of the social, economic and health status of seniors in the seven county area of southeast Michigan," said Thomas B. Jankowski, director of the project's data core and associate director of research at the IOG. "The senior population in southeast Michigan

will double in the next 30 years, and we must be ready for the challenges and opportunities that will bring," he said.

IOG Director Peter Lichtenberg explained that although demographic information about older adults has been collected, it is scattered across numerous agencies with no centralized way to extract meaning from the data. "It is the linkage of data from multiple sources that will significantly increase our understanding of the impact of an aging community," Dr. Lichtenberg said. This impact extends to health care, education, safety, business, and governmental systems. Policy makers must have accurate data to legislate effectively and spend tax dollars wisely.

Sara Gleicher, advocacy director of Adult Well-Being Services will share project responsibilities as community core director, seeking input from

service providers and policy makers about the data they find most useful. President and CEO of Adult Well-Being Services, Karen Schrock, said the project is modeled after the successful Kids Count! data collection, used for years by advocacy groups and policy makers because of its proven accuracy. "Ours is the first project of its kind for older adults," Ms. Schrock said. "Our long-term goal is to expand the model to all of Michigan and then other states where it is most needed."



"Our goal is to paint a complete and accurate picture of the social, economic and health status of seniors in the seven county area of southeast Michigan,"

- Dr. Jankowski



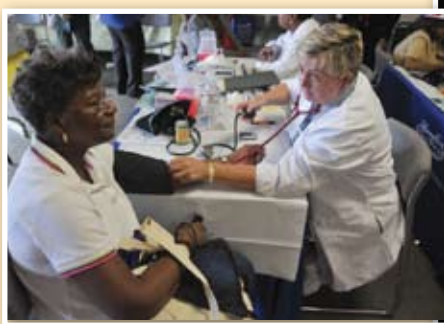
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June 2th Healthier Black Elders Reception

"Good Health is Earned, Not Given: Make It a Priority!"

This year's Healthier Black Elders Health Reception will be held Tuesday, June 2nd at Bert's Warehouse Theater in Eastern Market. Learn how to stay healthy as you age with fun and interesting exercise, music, stress-reduction, nutrition ideas, vendor information and health screenings. Hear special remarks from WDET DJ Jay Butler and Detroit Police Chief James Barren. Doors open at 8:45 for health screenings. The program runs from 10 am to 2:10 pm and includes a hot, sit-down lunch. Entry is free but you *must* have a pre-registration ticket to get in. Please call 313-577-2297 to complete the simple pre-registration process. Open to persons 55 years and older and their caregivers.

Pre-Registration Required by May 5th



Outreach

Seniors Count! *continued*

Ms. Gleicher added that accurate information about persons age 50 and up is critical to plan services and fund programs that best serve older residents. A recent study by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging found that only 46% of American communities are adequately prepared to address the needs of a growing elderly population.

Funding for the project came from the Kresge Foundation, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and the American House Foundation. "The Kresge Foundation applauds the project's commitment to promote the health, well-being and independence of older adults and their families," said Rip Rapson, president and CEO of the Kresge Foundation.

Prescription Drugs *continued*

of drugs when their insurance is limited," Dr. Jensen said. "Of special significance is whether this behavior leads to adverse health problems, and the estimated cost to society to treat these problems." The project will be conducted by a complex analysis of two large databases that include information on older adults, insurance coverage and health status. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provided funding for the grant.

Have You Downsized
Or Plan On Moving Soon?

**If you are 65 years or older,
we're looking for you!**

Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology is conducting a research study to understand how people downsize and move in later life.

Participants Receive \$35

Mark Luborsky, Ph.D. & Cathy Lysack, Ph.D.,
Co-Principal Investigators



FOR MORE
INFORMATION CALL:
(313) 577-2297,
ask for the
Downsizing Study

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www.iog.wayne.edu

Author and Educator Presents Century Project Inaugural Gift

The CENTURY PROJECT Update

Frances Shani Parker, author of *Becoming Dead Right* and a former Detroit school principal has generously designated a \$25,000 gift to the IOG's Century Project to support the Institute's research into aging. "Financially supporting quality research will ensure a better future for our growing population of seniors," Ms. Parker said. Her gift is the first for the Century Project, formed in November of 2008. Monies given to the Century Project seed a research endowment fund to ensure a continuous stream of dollars to support faculty, staff and laboratory facilities.

"I am impressed with the level of commitment

the Institute of Gerontology has made to the Detroit community," Ms. Parker said. "I invite others to join me in these efforts to promote aging with dignity." Ms. Parker presented highlights from her book and nursing home experiences to graduate students and faculty at an IOG colloquium in 2007.

Ms. Parker was inspired to write her book, *Becoming Dead Right: A Hospice Volunteer in Urban Nursing Homes* (Loving Healing Press, 2007), after nine years of volunteering in inner-city Detroit hospices and seeing the need for positive conversations about end-of-life issues. Her book intersperses insights, research and anecdotal accounts with her own moving poetry. A school principal for



"I invite others to join me in these efforts to promote aging with dignity."

- Frances Shani Parker

10 years prior to her hospice work, she has been honored as Outstanding Educational Administrator by the Metropolitan Detroit Alliance of Black School Educators and named Educator of the Year by the Wayne State University chapter of *Phi Delta Kappa*. *Becoming Dead Right* is available at Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, and at Ms. Parker's website www.francesshaniparker.com.

PARTNERSHIP CORNER

American House Foundation Extends Its Helping Hand

American House Foundation (AHF) is one of the few non-profits in Michigan with the dual mission of direct donations to seniors coupled with proportionate donations to research. Of every dollar donated to seniors, 30 cents goes to the IOG to support research, education and prevention programs. The IOG's director also holds a permanent seat on the AHF Board of Trustees. Since AHF launched late last year, it has raised \$125,000, built a fund of nearly \$84,000 to distribute to disadvantaged seniors throughout Detroit and granted \$37,000 to the IOG.

In December, more than 100 needy seniors received free food and clothing at the Central United Methodist Church in Detroit, thanks to the generosity of the American House Foundation, Citizens for Better Care and other local organizations. Seniors ate a hot soup lunch from the Matt Prentice Restaurant Group, took home a filled grocery bag from Sun Valley

Foods, a \$50 food coupon donated by Save-A-Lot, and new boots compliments of American House Foundation. Here are a few other older adults who were helped recently:

Daisy Williams, 84, was wheelchair bound in her Inkster home until AHF built a 30-foot railed ramp from her front door to her driveway.

Evelyn McLeod, 80, was close to eviction from her Detroit home after a 40-foot tree fell on her roof and she didn't have the funds to remove it. AHF sent crews to remove the tree without further damage to her home.

James Fuller, 61 and a diabetic, punctured his foot on a nail and spent two years trying to get it to heal. The pain took its toll on him mentally and physically. Doctors recommended special diabetic shoes to relieve the pressure on the wound but James was out of work and uninsured. AHF paid the \$500 for the new shoes to get James back on his feet.

Judith, 64, cares for her husband who has been bed-ridden due to chemotherapy treatments. She needed a knee replacement but couldn't get a ride service to take her to physical therapy sessions after the surgery. AHF provided the shuttle service that allowed Judith to have her knee replaced and continue caring for her husband in their home.

AHF has also provided numerous wheelchairs, lift-chairs, walkers, home repairs and senior-friendly bathroom upgrades. Persons interested in donating to AHF or submitting a grant request, should contact Terri Bailey at 313-875-9048.



Raise Your Glass to Raise Some Money

The Birmingham Country Club is hosting a fund-raiser for the American House Foundation on Thursday, May 7, from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. The event includes a wine tasting, silent auction, Disneyworld vacation raffle, and special guest presenters. A full 100% of all proceeds go to the American House Foundation to help older adults in the Detroit area. Tickets are \$125. If you are interested in attending, please call Kari Gillette at 248-203-1800.

SAVE THE DATE!

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (free unless otherwise noted)

GERONTOLOGY COLLOQUIUM (9:30 -10:30am): All presentations take place in the Hoobler Conference Room, 2nd Floor of the Freer House, adjacent to the west of the IOG. Presenters are local, national or international faculty and students who are experts in their field.

MARCH 24

Medicare Part B and the Quality of Physician Care

MARCH 3

Nobody's Burden: Narratives of the Great Depression in Detroit

APRIL 7

The Aging Brain: Crossroads of Attention and Memory

APRIL 13

Cognitive Impairment and Fall Risk

APRIL 14

Predictors of Functional Capacity in Centenarians

MARCH 31 (10:30 – NOON)

Skillful Aging: Accepting the Limits, Making the Adjustments, is presented free through the Healthier Black Elders Center Healthcare Consumer

Learning Series, held at the Franklin Wright Settlement, 3360 Charlevoix Street, 48207. Experts will discuss how to talk to your doctor, the downside of gambling, and finding resources close to home. Call Patricia Rencher at 313-577-2297, ext. 351 for details.

APRIL 9 (10:30-11:30am)

Everything You Wanted to Know about Sexuality and Aging, at the St. Johns VanElslander Cancer Center, 19229 Mack Ave., Grosse Pointe Woods, 48236. The IOG's Dr. Lichtenberg joins psychotherapist Dr. Sharon Rose in this free, open dialogue about sexual needs and functioning as we age. Call the IOG for details or visit www.iog.wayne.edu/wowa.php

MAY 11 & 12

Issues in Aging Professional Conference. Two days of continuing education presentations aimed at physicians, nurses, social workers, administrators and other persons working with older adults. Troy Management Education Center. Cost is \$105 for one day, \$200 for both days. Register online at <http://iog.wayne.edu/issuesinaging.php> or call Donna MacDonald at 313-577-2297.

JUNE 2 (9am-2:30pm) See article on page 4.

HBEC Reception "Good Health is Earned, Not Given: Make It a Priority!"

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