The University of Florida is seeking older adults between the ages of 70 and 89 to take part in a lifestyle interventions study that will determine whether exercise or health education can prevent or delay major movement disability in older adults. Field sites are in both Gainesville and Jacksonville; the trial is currently being conducted at a total of eight institutions around the country.

Called the Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders (LIFE) Study, this 6-year study is a phase 3 randomized controlled trial of 1,600 sedentary older adults who are at risk of mobility disability. The LIFE Study is comparing the long-term effectiveness of exercise and health education to see which, if either, can prevent or delay mobility disability in older adults.

The IOA Receives Award for New Building

Following a highly competitive peer review process, the University of Florida’s Institute on Aging (IOA) has been awarded a grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to build a complex intended to facilitate participation of older adults in clinical trials and promote cooperation among existing research centers, including: the Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center, the Clinical and Translational Science Institute and the recently established Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research Program.

Director’s Welcome

Dear friends of the IOA,

It is our great pleasure to announce that Dr. Susan Nayfield has recently joined our Department and Institute as Associate Professor and Division Chief of the Clinical Research Division and Acting Chief of the Geriatric Medicine Division.

Dr. Nayfield comes with an extensive, multi-faceted education and training followed by 19 years of experience in key leadership roles at the National Institutes of Health, first at the National Cancer Institute and later at the National Institute on Aging, where she worked as Chief of the Geriatrics Branch, Geriatrics and Clinical Gerontology Extramural Program.

By participating in countless initiatives, fostering and promoting competitive funding of research at the national level, and serving as a mentor and counselor of several rising and established stars in research, Dr. Nayfield has become a nationally recognized leader in key scientific areas related to aging.

Her valuable advice played a significant role in the direction of the overall research of the IOA team, which has resulted in building one of the most successful and highest funded interdisciplinary research programs on aging in the nation.

Dr. Nayfield brings outstanding experience, talent and leadership to our team, which are critical in the current time of unprecedented growth of our Department and Institute.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Nayfield!
The Resveratrol for Improved Performance in the Elderly (RIPE) Trial at the IOA

The UF Institute on Aging scientists are recruiting participants for a clinical trial to test whether Resveratrol, a compound found in red wine and dark-skinned grapes, can help improve memory and physical functioning in older adults. In animal studies, Resveratrol has been shown to improve memory and protect against cardiovascular diseases, cancers and other age-related changes. Resveratrol is also one of a small number of compounds shown to extend lifespan in flies, fish and other organisms.

“If Resveratrol is found to have a beneficial impact, the supplement might be a potential treatment option to fight age-related cognitive decline,” said Todd Manini, Ph.D., who is co-principal investigator with Steve Anton, Ph.D.

Titled the Resveratrol for Improved Performance in the Elderly (RIPE) Trial, the study will provide insights about the effects of Resveratrol on specific areas of the brain and the mechanisms through which it produces observed results. Additionally, the study will assess Resveratrol’s impact on reducing fatigue levels and fat content of muscles among other areas of potential impact.

The RIPE Trial seeks 30 volunteers between age 65 and 100 who lead a sedentary lifestyle to take part in the 12-week phase I trial. Participants must be non-smokers who do not regularly drink red wine and are able to walk one mile.

To enroll or learn more about the RIPE study, call 352-273-5919 or toll-free 866-386-7730.
Dr. Leeuwenburgh and Dr. Bazikian Make an Unprecedented Gift to the IOA

The Institute on Aging is grateful to Drs. Leeuwenburgh and Bazikian for their generous estate gift. Dr. Leeuwenburgh is Chief of the Division of Biology of Aging and Professor of Aging and Geriatrics. Dr. Bazikian is a physician at North Florida Regional Hospital.

The newlyweds’ gift is an expression of their commitment both to each other and to the IOA. They meaningfully expressed their reason for making the gift: “The outstanding mission of the IOA and the incredibly hard working staff, students and faculty make it easy to support the IOA mission.”

Dr. Leeuwenburgh believes that funding contributions to Geriatric and Gerontological Research will ensure novel interventions and treatment in Florida, supporting his dream for the state to become an example for “Healthy Aging.”

A long-time Gator, Dr. Leeuwenburgh completed his B.S. and M.S. at the University of Florida. He sincerely feels that it is important to give back in order to show appreciation for all that he has received.

Drs. Leeuwenburgh and Bazikian hope that their gift will contribute to the IOA’s success for many, many years to come.

The Cognitive Aging and Memory Program

Dr. Marco Pahor, Director of the Institute on Aging, was recently appointed the program coordinator for the newly established Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research Program (CAM-CTRP). The ultimate goal of the CAM-CTRP is to develop clinical applications to slow, avert or restore age-related cognitive decline and memory loss.

Dr. Pahor and Dr. Thomas Foster, professor of Neuroscience and McKnight Chair for Research on Aging and Memory, hosted a meeting for distinguished guests from the Board of Trustees for the McKnight Foundation for Brain Research. Students, faculty and staff from the entire UF campus were invited to attend presentations by McKnight Brain Institute faculty and researchers, focusing on aging and cognitive decline. Among these speakers were two core leaders of the Pepper Center, Dr. Michael Marsiske and Dr. Christy Carter, and one of our junior scholars, Zvinka Zlatar.

Dr. Joe Verghese, Associate Professor of Neurology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Louis and Gertrude Feil Faculty Scholar in Neurology, delivered a keynote presentation on remediating cognitive decline in the elderly.

The search for the future CAM-CTRP Program Director is ongoing.
Unlocking life’s mysteries – particularly the secrets of how long and how well we live – is the distinct focus of the University of Florida’s Institute on Aging. Our scientists and physicians are dedicated to achieving better understanding of the mechanisms of aging and how we can maintain or enhance our physical independence and cognitive abilities.

Private philanthropy is so essential to our work. Your gift, regardless of size, can make the critical difference in funding new scientific endeavors. Imagine discoveries that fuel positive cellular changes; identify new therapies that help rehabilitate aging bones and joints; or uncover additional pharmaceutical allies. Private philanthropy makes all this and much more possible.

To learn more about how you can invest in a healthier and more independent tomorrow for us all, please contact Sandra Fackler, Senior Director of Development, at (352)265-7227 or sfackler@ufl.edu.