



THE

Continuum

Summer '10

From Bench to Bedside

McKnight Brain Research Foundation Hosts Interdisciplinary Meeting at UF

The third annual meeting brought together researchers from four institutions funded by the foundation: the University of Florida, the University of Miami, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Arizona.

Development of new therapies to prevent, delay or slow age-related memory loss requires a cross-disciplinary effort, according to researchers who met recently at the University of Florida to discuss how to move state-of-the-art therapies quickly into clinical trials.

"When these scientists collaborate, it's a chance to multiply the research effect," said McKnight trustee J. Lee Dockery, M.D., former interim and executive associate dean at the UF College of Medicine.

UF President J. Bernard Machen, D.D.S., Ph.D., joined David S. Guzick, M.D., Ph.D., senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System, and Michael Good, M.D., dean of the UF College of Medicine, in welcoming researchers from guest institutions.

The scientific program, which was developed by Tom Foster, Ph.D., the Evelyn F. McKnight chair for brain research in memory loss at UF, gave attendees the chance to listen to presentations, view posters and tour facilities such as the Aging and Rehabilitation Research Center and the McKnight Brain Institute programs in magnetic resonance neuroimaging, radiosurgery and deep brain stimulation surgery, cell and tissue analysis, and gene therapy. Also included was a panel discussion on the steps involved in translating experimental observations into research trials and therapies for patients.



Neurosurgery professor Frank Bova, Ph.D., discusses efforts to perfect radiosurgery systems for treating brain tumors, during the McKnight Brain Research Foundation's recent meeting at UF.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



A.H. Burnett Foundation trustees Mary Ellen Burnett (left) and Jan Jones (right) share a moment with Institute on Aging associate director Lauren Crump, M.P.H., during their visit to UF.

The University of Florida Institute on Aging received a grant from the A.H. Burnett Foundation in support of its work to improve the health and quality of life of older adults. Trustees Mary Ellen Burnett, Jan Jones, Ted Prosser and Fulbia Westfall visited the institute recently to tour the facilities and learn about a range of projects, including lifestyle intervention trials and projects aimed at uncovering the molecular basis of aging.

"We are pleased to help address the institute's greatest needs as it leads the way in aging research."

- Mary Ellen Burnett

Having cared for aging family members, the trustees' backing of the institute is as much a result of personal experience as it is of goodwill. Burnett and Jones created the foundation in honor of their uncle Alexander "Sandy" Burnett, who believed in promoting education and helping others.

McKnight Meeting at UF

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Photo by Priscilla Santos

McKnight Brain Research Foundation trustees meet at UF. From left: Teresa Borcheck, J. Lee Dockery, M.D., Judith Salerno, M.D., Nina Ellenbogen Raim, M.D., J.D., and John G. Clarkson, M.D.

“Moving diagnostic tools and treatments from the laboratory to the clinic requires teamwork among researchers in many different fields,” said Marco Pahor, M.D., director of the UF Institute on Aging, who spoke at the meeting. “The support of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation and meetings such as this help to propel things forward by facilitating and strengthening pivotal collaborations.”

Kenneth Heilman, M.D., a UF clinical professor of neurology and health psychology, and Scott Small, M.D., a Columbia University associate professor of neurology, delivered keynote addresses that attendees described as provocative, compelling and inspirational.

“They charged us with applying new insights from genetics and molecular, cellular, functional, behavioral and imaging neuroscience toward therapies for reversing and treating age-related cognitive decline,” said Dennis Steindler, Ph.D., executive director of UF’s McKnight Brain Institute. 🌴

Aspirin: Lifesaver or Risky Regimen? IOA Seeks Healthy Older Adults for New Trial

The Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly (ASPREE) study is the first to examine whether the potential benefits of low-dose aspirin outweigh the associated risks for people 70 and older.



The University of Florida’s Institute on Aging is recruiting men and women 70 and older to take part in the Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly (ASPREE) study, an international study of whether daily low-dose aspirin can help stave off disabling conditions and increase life expectancy among healthy seniors.

The American Heart Association recommends aspirin for preventing recurrence of heart attack and stroke, but for healthy individuals the benefit is unclear. Furthermore, aspirin side effects, such as bleeding, may be more frequent in older adults.

“For some people, aspirin therapy might present health risks not worth taking. This study may provide much-needed evidence to guide geriatricians and researchers as they care for older adults and help them maintain good health as they age,” said principal investigator Susan Nayfield, M.D., M.Sc., chief of the division of clinical research.

The trial is funded by the National Institute on Aging, the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia, the National Heart Foundation of Australia, the Victorian Cancer Agency and Bayer Schering Pharma.

To be eligible, individuals must be 70 years or older and in good health. For five years, the selected participants will receive a daily dose of either aspirin or placebo. They will complete annual questionnaires, undergo annual physical examinations and laboratory tests, and participate in quarterly telephone calls. Participants will be compensated for their time.

For more information or to enroll, call [352-273-5919](tel:352-273-5919) or [866-386-7730](tel:866-386-7730) and ask about “The ASPREE study.” 🌴

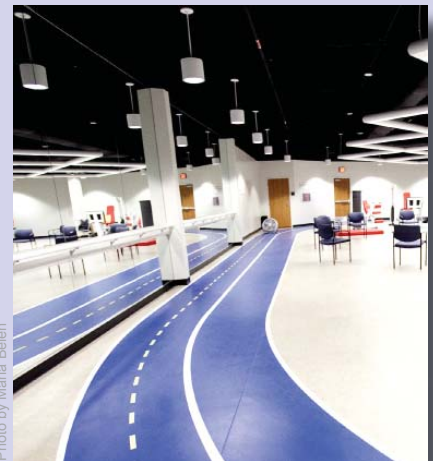


Photo by Maria Belen

The walking track at the new Health Promotion Center is used for various research trials, including the LIFE study.



An artist rendering of the new Institute on Aging building to be completed in 2015.

The University of Florida's Institute on Aging has received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to construct an almost 40,000-square-foot facility for clinical and translational research. The building will bring together scientists from a range of scientific disciplines and enhance how aging research is carried out on campus.

"This is a unique opportunity to have basic science, clinical, epidemiology and health services researchers working under the same roof on a common goal — improving the health and independence of older adults," said Marco Pahor, M.D., director of the UF Institute on Aging.

Adjoining the Institute on Aging will be the Clinical and Translational Research Building, an 80,000-square-foot UF-funded complex that houses the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, the UF Clinical Research Center, clinical trial regulatory oversight offices, diabetes, muscular dystrophy and other clinical research programs, biostatistics, bioinformatics and epidemiology research, and a geriatric medicine multispecialty clinic.

The Institute on Aging portion of the project is funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and will create or retain an estimated 376 jobs. The building is designed according to the U. S. Green Building Council's LEED Platinum certification standards. 🌴

IOA Health Promotion Center Now Open

Nestled behind the ground floor corridors of the Dental Science Building is a spacious surprise — the Health Promotion Center of the Institute on Aging. This new resource features more than 7,000 square feet where research study participants can walk on a 200-foot cushioned indoor track, balance on ballet-style bars set in a mirror-paneled wall, receive health education or whip up easy meals in a demonstration kitchen.

The center is now being used for the NIH-funded LIFE Study, which seeks to determine whether physical activity or health education can prevent mobility disability in older adults, and the Task-Specific Exercise Study, which compares the relative benefit of exercises that mimic daily-life activities with exercises geared toward general fitness.

The center will not only improve aging research at UF, but also allow collaboration among departments investigating the role of lifestyle intervention in disease prevention and management. 🌴

Welcome to Our New Faculty and Staff:

Veronica Griffith, AR-NP; Amber Schwier-Del Visco, Mienecia Black and Kimberly Case, study coordinators; Ching-Ju Lu, assistant program manager; Kelly Gamble, research scientist; Marvin Dirain, senior laboratory technician; Brian Hoover, interventionist; Sarah Drawver, data entry; Jacob Adams, receptionist; Kathleen Rouisse, graduate assistant; Madeleine Traore, office assistant; Yukari Takata, Kindal Sweet and Kelly Larkin, student assistants.

Yohannes Endeshaw, M.D., associate professor will join us in September, 2010.

Opportunities to Participate In Research Studies:

If you are interested in participating in one of our current or future studies, you can now enroll in our Institutional Review Board approved recruitment registry. To enroll or obtain additional information, call Peggy Smith at 1-866-386-7730 or e-mail psmith@aging.ufl.edu.

New Positions:

We are currently advertising several faculty and staff positions; more will be posted soon. For employment opportunities, visit <http://www.aging.ufl.edu/?q=jobs> or e-mail Camelia Pascu at cpascu@aging.ufl.edu.

Internship Opportunities:

The Health Promotion Center seeks interns to work on clinical trials examining the effects of physical activity and other lifestyle interventions among older adults. These positions will involve directly assisting participants with physical activity interventions, collecting data and monitoring safety. A strong interest in exercise training, experience working with older adults or a desire to do so, and basic computing skills are key. Please e-mail resumes to Allison Martin at amartin@aging.ufl.edu.

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MAKE A GIFT

Giving to the Institute on Aging ...why every dollar counts

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 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 Lauren Crump, MPH, at [352-265-7227](tel:352-265-7227) or e-mail lcrump@aging.ufl.edu. 

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