Successful Aging

A publication from the Stein Institute for Research on Aging and the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging

August 2019

Human Longevity: Symposium of the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging

BY MAJA GAWRONSKA, MA

What does it take to live to one hundred and beyond? To what extent do our genes really dictate longevity? What can we do to enhance successful aging? Are there any scientific strategies in the pipeline? What is the secret of a few regions in the world where there is a high concentration of people who live beyond one hundred years old?

These and many more fascinating questions were addressed during our annual Symposium of the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging held on June 6. More than 450 people from the local and global community. Our goal is to create a world in which older adults enjoy the highest level of well-being, through innovative science, interprofessional collaborations, and community partnerships. Our work seeks to transform the care of older adults in San Diego and beyond and improve their quality of life. Your support enables us to fund innovative pilot projects, create multiprofessional local and global working groups, conduct important community projects, and host conferences and educational events for those in professional fields, as well as the public.

Here are some examples of our projects:

• Training for students and health-care professionals
• Research on technology for older adults
• Intergenerational housing and activities
• Making San Diego more age-friendly community and UC San Diego attended this day-long event hosted at Atkinson Hall Auditorium on the UC San Diego campus. The symposium showcased the latest research on longevity and strategies to continue living a vibrant and thriving life at any age.

After opening remarks from UC San Diego’s David Brenner, MD, vice chancellor for health sciences, and Sandra Brown, PhD, vice chancellor for research, Dilip V. Jeste, MD, senior associate dean for healthy aging and senior vice chancellor for the Center for Healthy Aging at UC San Diego, spoke on longevity and healthy aging. Dr. Jeste discussed the latest, cutting-edge research on the neurobiology of wisdom, successful aging, and the use of technology to help older adults thrive at any age.

The symposium’s keynote speaker, J. Craig Venter, PhD, and founder, chairman, and CEO of J. Craig Venter Institute, asserted during his lecture that aging is a phenomenon we should be able to influence and maybe even control through genomic science. He believes that by combining genetic and medical data at a massive scale, we will be able to predict, prevent, and treat diseases of aging, such as heart disease and Alzheimer’s.

Deborah Kado, MD, MS, professor of medicine at UC San Diego, spoke about curing and preventing osteoporosis. She also addressed hope for the future in addressing the disease that makes bones weaker and prone to fractures.

In the first panel called, “CIAO! (Cilento Intergenerational Aging),” Salvatore Di Somma, MD, PhD, professor of medicine and director of emergency medicine at University of La Sapienza Rome, Italy, talked about a fascinating study on a group of 300 citizens, all over one hundred years old, living in a remote Italian village nestled between the ocean and mountains on the country’s coast. UC San Diego researchers teamed up with his group as the first group of researchers to be given permission to study this population. Dr. Di Somma was joined by other local researchers participating in this research, including Mohit Jain, MD, PhD, assistant professor of medicine and pharmacology; Rob Knight, MD, director at Center for Microbiome Innovation; Anthony Molina, PhD, vice chair of research at the Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology; Robert Risman, PhD, director of UC San Diego’s Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center (ADRC); and Ellen Lee, MD, assistant professor of psychiatry at Stein Institute for Research on Aging, featured local successful agers who shared their life stories and strategies for growing older with the audience. Panelists included Natasha Joseftowicz, PhD, author, poet, retired professor; Hedges Capers, actor, director, musician, and Christa Stahl, retired educator and court-appointed child advocate.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Symposium. Please check back our website for videos of the talks.

HOW TO GIVE

If you would like to make a contribution to the Center for Healthy Aging and the Stein Institute, there are three ways to give:

ONLINE
Please visit aging.ucsd.edu and click on “Giving.”

BY PHONE OR EMAIL
Please call Danielle Glénes, LCSW, at (858) 246-0167 or email dglones@ucsd.edu.

BY MAIL
Please make your check payable to UC San Diego Foundation; write Stein Institute or the Center for Healthy Aging. Mail your gift to the address below:

University of California San Diego Health Sciences Department
Sam and Rose Stein Institute for Research on Aging
200 W. Arbor Dr. # 8982
San Diego, CA 92103-8982

Neuropathology and Biomarkers Core; David Brenner, MD; and Dr. Jeste.

Strategies for optimizing heart health in later life were offered in a lecture by Pamela Taub, MD, assistant professor of medicine, director at Hannah and Gene Stop Cardiac Wellness and Rehabilitation Center, UC San Diego. The second panel moderated by Ellen Lee, MD, assistant professor of psychiatry at Stein Institute for Research on Aging, featured local successful agers who shared their life stories and strategies for growing older with the audience. Panelists included Natasha Joseftowicz, PhD, author, poet, retired professor; Hedges Capers, actor, director, musician, and Christa Stahl, retired educator and court-appointed child advocate.

We Need Your Support!

When you choose to support the Center for Healthy Aging and the Stein Institute for Research on Aging, you’re making the decision to support the pursuit of a healthier, longer life for you, your loved ones, and your local and global community. Your support is crucial to our ability to have an impact on our aging population here and around the world.

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In August, Dilip V. Jeste, MD, will give Grand Rounds on successful aging at the University of Tulane in Louisiana.

Interested in participating in a study on heart health with Principal Investigator Pamela Taub, MD, FACCP? Please contact Hannah Lo at (858) 246-2510.

For more information, please visit aging.ucsd.edu and on the UC San Diego campus. The symposium showcased the latest research on longevity and strategies to continue living a vibrant and thriving life at any age.

Ellen Lee, MD, assistant professor at the Stein Institute has been awarded the 2019 Justine Cohen Award for Outstanding Research in Schizophrenia.

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Summer Training Programs in Aging Research

It is a busy summer here at the Center for Healthy Aging and the Stein Institute as we are becoming a national hub for training future researchers in aging research. It is our goal to create a new cadre of physicians and scientists who will continue to decipher the science on aging and care for the growing aging population. Congratulations to our trainees from all around the country, and thank you to mentors who volunteer their time!

The Stein Institute Jackuellin Harris High School Summer Training in Aging Research (HS STAR)
Christine Ly
Shah Mouez
Christina Nghiem

Medical Student Research Opportunities (MSSTAR)
Katarina Au
Emily Balon
Allison Chen
Caitlin Christian
Dustin Cox
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Jennifer Laborada

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Cam{a Naberker, PhD
Brinda Rana, PhD
Robert Rossman, PhD
Samar{a Shalt, PhD
Dorota Skowroniska

Award recipient Lisa Chick and Dilip V. Jeste, MD

Lisa Chick Awarded Dr. Selma Silagi Award
We are thrilled to announce that Lisa Chick, an undergraduate researcher at the Stein Institute, has been awarded the Dr. Selma Silagi Award. Chick graduated from UC San Diego with a bachelor’s of science in psychology and neuroscience. She joined AmeriCorps, a voluntary civil society program engaging adults in public service work, with a goal of “helping others and meeting critical needs in the community” and will volunteer in a school in Denver. She plans to attend a medical school the following year, and we wish her all the best.

This year her campus opened a new tribute to Dr. Selma Silagi, best known for her work changing malignant melanoma cells into nonmalignant cells and back again. She died in 1998. The Dr. Selma Silagi Award at UC San Diego recognizes a student researcher who is making contributions to basic research in cancer until her retirement from Cornell University in 1987 when she moved with her husband, Robert, to San Diego. She is best known for her work in 1966 when she used a mouse model to change malignant melanoma cells into nonmalignant cells and back again. She died in 1998. The Dr. Selma Silagi Award at UC San Diego was established in 1999 by her family.

Dr. Selma Silagi Award recipient Lisa Chick and Dilip V. Jeste, MD

MAKE A PLAN TODAY TO CREATE AN IMPACT TOMORROW

Did you know there is more than one way to support the Stein Institute and the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging? From a bequest in your will or trust to a beneficiary designation in your retirement account to a donation of appreciated securities, there are many types of noncash gifts that will help us achieve our goals. The UC San Diego Office of Gift Planning can answer your questions. Visit giftsplanning.ucsd.edu or call (858) 534-5529. Thank you for the difference you are making today ... and tomorrow!

SUCCESFUL AGERS IN ACTION

This Month’s Successful Ager: Edith Renfrow Smith

Dr. Selma Silagi Award recipient Lisa Chick and Dilip V. Jeste, MD

Edith Renfrow Smith receiving her honorary Doctor of Humane Letters

By Maia Gawronska

At 104 years old, Edith Renfrow Smith feels great and has a memory as sharp as ever. “How Mental Health Care for the Aging is Feeling Shortage,” MarketWatch, features Dilip V. Jeste, MD

How Mental Health Care for the Aging is Feeling Shortage, MarketWatch, features Dilip V. Jeste, MD, and Danielle Grissom, LCSW

Successful Ager in Action

SUCCESSFUL AGERS IN ACTION

An education professor as an assistant to pay her tuition (which cost a whopping $125 per year). Being one of the first African-American women in college was challenging. What helped was Smith’s approach to people, which she has been teaching to others for years. “People are people. Some are nice, and some are not. If they’re not nice, leave them alone.”

After graduation, she moved to Chicago, like many fellow students, where she worked as a stenographer and telephone operator, before settling in a successful and rewarding twenty-year career as a school teacher in public schools. She also married her beloved husband of seventy-three years and raised two daughters, Virginia and Alice. She stayed busy after retirement volunteering for Goodwill, the Art Institute, and as a study subject participating in research on aging.

Smith says that as far as successful aging is concerned, there’s no silver bullet. It is complicated. But keeping on the bright side can’t do you any harm.

Every gift makes a difference. Small gifts pooled together or made annually can achieve big results. A special gift to support a particular program helps us to move our mission forward. Please join our efforts today by supporting our programs with a charitable gift.

• $25,000 funds an aging-related pilot project for a junior faculty member.
• $10,000 funds a research project for a postdoctoral fellow.
• $5,000 supports a graduate student for one quarter.
• $3,000 funds the filming of one public lecture.
• $2,500 funds one issue of our newsletter.
• $500 funds twenty-five participants in our successful aging study.
• $350 funds a high school student for a week, including a stipend and all supplies.