Nation’s Healthy Aging Experts Offer Solutions to Address Rapidly Rising Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders in Older Americans

A newly published paper titled, “Promoting Wellness in Older Adults with Mental Illnesses and Substance Use Disorders: Call to Action to All Stakeholders” in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry (AJGP) summarizes the current state of knowledge on specific mental illness and substance abuse concerns in older Americans, identifies research gaps, and presents recommendations for health education and public policy. The paper also notes the importance of the positive side of aging, including resilience, well-being, compassion, and wisdom. These coping skills are teachable and should be used for enhancing function and reducing morbidity in later life in people with mental illness and substance use disorders.

The paper was the result of a 2017 workshop convened in Washington, DC, by the Alliance for Aging Research and the Sam and Rose Stein Institute for Research on Aging at UC San Diego School of Medicine. The panel brought together top academic, provider, and public policy experts in the fields of geriatric mental health and patient advocacy, as well as representatives from key federal agencies, to explore the essential mental and behavioral health concerns of older Americans. “Older adults who suffer from mental illnesses, including substance use disorders and dementia, are among the most disenfranchised groups in healthcare. Their quality of life is diminished, and their lives are cut short,” said lead coauthor Dilip V. Jeste, MD, senior associate dean for healthy aging and senior care and director of the Center for Healthy Aging at UC San Diego.

Panelists proposed solutions for addressing the areas of concern. The key takeaways include the following:

1) For mental health issues accompanying dementia:
   • Enable home-based care and train health professionals to serve as educators for caregivers to assist with behavioral issues.
   • Raise standards for early diagnosis and personalized management of residents with neuropsychiatric symptoms.

2) For depression and suicide:
   • Develop and test ways of implementing evidence-based practices to treat depression and prevent suicide, and to train/educate lay people and health care providers.

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WISDOM, COMPASSION, AND LONGEVITY

From the nature of wisdom and happiness, to the evolutionary value of grandparents and the future roles of education and technology, noted experts from across the country gathered on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, for an all-day symposium on what it means to grow older and wiser, happily and healthfully. This special symposium titled, “Wisdom, Compassion, and Longevity” was hosted by the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging and the Stein Institute for Research on Aging on the UC San Diego main campus and drew more than four hundred researchers, staff, and members of the public.

This unique event provided an opportunity for leaders in the field to come together to discuss the various aspects of wisdom as it relates to longevity and aging and spanned a full day of presentations from diverse fields. The topics included:

• practical wisdom;
• happiness, virtue, and the meaning of life;
• wisdom and frontotemporal dementia;
• wisdom and longevity;
• grandparent genes;
• evolution of human social and emotional functions;
• societal implications of emerging trends in education and technology.
**OCTOBER**

**Osteoporosis Update 2018**

**Gina Woods, MD**  
Associate Clinical Professor,  
Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, University of California San Diego  

**Wednesday, October 17, 5:30 p.m.**  
Garren Auditorium  
UC San Diego  

Please register at aging.ucsd.edu.

**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 giftplanning.ucsd.edu or call (858) 534-5529. Thank you for the difference you are making today ... and tomorrow!

Gina Woods, MD

Gina Woods, MD, is a board-certified endocrinologist who treats people with osteoporosis and other metabolic bone diseases. She works with individuals to preserve bone health, prevent fractures, and manage osteoporosis care with treatments that may include diet modification, exercise, and medication.

As an associate professor in the Department of Medicine’s Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, Dr. Woods trains medical students, residents, and fellows at UC San Diego School of Medicine. She conducts research on bone marrow adiposity and its effects on skeletal health. Her other interests include calcium and vitamin D—topics about which she has lectured at professional conferences.

Dr. Woods completed a residency in internal medicine and clinical and research fellowships in endocrinology at UC San Diego School of Medicine. She earned her medical degree from Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia. She is board certified in internal medicine and endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism.

She is a member of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research and the Endocrine Society.

**OCTOBER’S LECTURE**

**PARKING AND DIRECTIONS**

Please purchase a permit from a kiosk at any parking structure at UC San Diego or park in a metered space. Make sure you select a parking space allowed by your permit and be sure the permit is properly displayed.

From Gilman Parking Structure:

- Cross Gilman Drive toward Parking Lot P602.
- Take the small asphalt path to the right of Stein Clinical Research Building.
- Cross the lawn (or follow the sidewalk) toward the Medical Teaching Facility Building (MTF).
- Walk between the two MFT buildings (i.e., walk under the MTF building’s pedestrian bridge).
- Continue along the sidewalk to enter the Biomedical Sciences Building through large sliding glass doors.
- Turn left at the first hallway. Garren Auditorium will be on your right, Room 1105.

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR LECTURES!**

Are you enjoying our lecture series? While our events are free, please consider making a charitable donation to the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging. Please contact Danielle Glorioso, LCSW, at dglorioso@ucsd.edu or (858) 246-0767 to learn more.

Please register at aging.ucsd.edu.
Successful Ager in Action: Fred Hillhouse

BY JANE SAWYER

The sun rises over the Point Loma Peninsula each morning to greet long-time resident Fred Hillhouse. Fred has seen forty-two years come and go from his modest, stucco home and well-tended garden atop this peninsula, where the Pacific Ocean meets the San Diego Bay. While Fred settled on this peninsula first explored by Europeans in 1542, his roots extend to New England. His ancestor, William Bradford, became the first governor of Plymouth after arriving on the Mayflower in 1620.

Fred is matter-of-fact about coordinating a visiting nurse, gardener, housekeeper, and a caregiver from a calendar and yellow-lined pad on his desk. He steadily manages his independence this way. His 2017 memoir, My Life Adds Up—a play on words by the former bookkeeper, describes his east coast youth and love for beer, dancing, theater, and nightlife in New York City and San Francisco. After a deeper look at late nights and bars, Fred calculated the exact six-figure sum he spent before he quit drinking forty years ago!

Fred’s memory for details is remarkable. His book describes his 1945 WWII landing at Okinawa, digging his fox hole, and repositioning himself as low as possible in the damp sand to sleep. His unit moved out at sunrise, under heavy clouds of smoke, released to obscure them from Japanese suicide bombers. His division built a government hospital, where he worked on a medical ward. After less than a year, Typhoon Louise destroyed much of the island, including the hospital, and drove both locals and navy personnel into hillside caves to survive.

Fred studied accounting before his navy enlistment and has enjoyed a lifelong penchant for record keeping, both in professional positions at Chase Bank and Buffalo Solvent and Chemical in New York State, the San Francisco Giants baseball team and New Frontier Trading Company in San Diego and personally through his collections of memorabilia ranging from photos of family, to the music, film, and baseball greats he has met. There are also hundreds of autographs from presidents, first ladies, actors, and comedians, and hundreds of Playbills that reflect his love for theater. Ballroom dance, his first passion, no doubt accounted for many willing dance partners and his agility in later life!

Hiring student caregivers from nearby Point Nazarene College has worked well for Fred for many years. Marco, his current caregiver, comes three or four times a week and checks in by phone on other days. They go to the grocery store, doctor’s office, pharmacy, and on other errands. Marco tries to encourage Fred to join him in calisthenics at the house, but Fred shrugs his shoulders and tells Marco that he’ll consider it.

A May 2018 heart attack and injuries from falling in 2012 were serious health events for Fred. The fall occurred when his shoe got caught on a garden hose, and he fell sustaining severe head and neck injuries. Luckily, he dialed 9-1-1 before he passed out. He has no memory of the next two months in the hospital room, a rehab facility, and a private care home, where he slowly regained his health and then moved back to Point Loma.

The day I visited, Fred rose from his chair, grabbed the adjacent walker, and showed me his home. He uses a laptop for email, internet surfing, and solitaire. There’s a large den, doubling as a gallery, with paintings and photos of his beloved cats and dogs. We also looked at the back yard, where neatly manicured grass, plants, and garden statuary show his years of care.

According to Fred, there is no great secret to his longevity. He rises early, receives a call from the neighbor lady checking in on him, sees his few weekly visitors, and speaks with his brother and two nieces and their families by phone. He had a book signing on June 30, and now he is resuming work on creating his annual Christmas card for 242 recipients, including Queen Elizabeth and the President. Next winter he’ll sit on his sofa and re-read his favorite replies. It’s all part of a steady and satisfying rhythm of life that Fred has pursued for years, and he will likely continue.

Solutions

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• Increase partnerships with organizations outside of health organizations, which can reduce social isolation and loneliness, and nonprofit organizations to improve community outreach.

• Improve public and family caregiver awareness regarding the increased risk of suicide that is associated with firearms access.

3) For serious mental illness and substance use disorders:

• Develop and test effectiveness of community-based interventions to identify and treat older adults with co-occurring mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders.

• Identify and develop multidisciplinary treatment algorithms for appropriate alternatives to opioids for pain.

• Promote programs that offer integrated living environments and supported decision-making for older adults with mental disorders.


center for
healthy aging
in the news

“The Personality Traits that People Who Live to Be 100 Have in Common”: CNBC, features Dilip V. Jeste, MD

“Researchers Find Resilience Counteracts Effects of Childhood Abuse and Neglect on Health”: Health News Digest, features Dilip V. Jeste, MD, and Ellen Lee, MD

“How Wise Are You? One Scientist Is Trying to Create a Test”: TED Ideas, features Dilip V. Jeste, MD
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.

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

We Need Your Support!

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 Glorioso, LCSW, at (858) 246-0767 or e-mail dglorioso@ucsd.edu.

**BY MAIL**
Please make your check payable to UC San Diego Foundation; write Stein Institute or Center for Healthy Aging in the memo portion of the check and include a brief note specifying whether you would like your donation to go to the Stein Institute or the Center for Healthy Aging. Mail your gift to the address below:

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