
Upcoming Conferences and Seminars

- April 29, Los Angeles - **“Dilemmas in Geriatric Care for State Surveyors”**
A special half-day training session for the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Licensing Division. Open to health care professionals. Enrollment is limited.
- April 30, Anaheim, CA - **“Malnutrition and Weight Loss”**
Half-day seminar presented by the California Geriatric Education Center prior to the 25th Annual Seminar of the California Association of Medical Directors. CME credit is available.
- May 7, Los Angeles **“Aging and the Developmentally Disabled”**
One-day course for informal and formal caregivers, and clients of services for the developmentally disabled. Valley Presbyterian Hospital Health Education Center.
- May 25, West Los Angeles - **UCLA Academic Geriatric Resource Center (AGRC) 1999 Distinguished Faculty Colloquium will honor Rose Gibson**, PhD, Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan Department of Social Work. VA West Los Angeles Healthcare Center, Building 500, Room 3232, 3:00pm.
- June 22-26, West Los Angeles **“Cultural Diversity in Health & Aging”**
The 1999 UCLA CGEC Interdisciplinary Faculty Development Program, a week long, in-residence, intensive session. Provides visiting faculty the opportunity to examine cultural diversity among aging populations, using state-of-the-art, interdisciplinary perspectives and social and health-related aspects of aging.
- July 23-24, Anaheim, CA - **“Controversies in Women’s Health”**
Presented by UCLA School of Medicine, Office of Continuing Medical Education, the Iris Cantor - UCLA Women’s Health Center, and the UCLA National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health. Designed for anyone involved in the primary care of women to improve the clinician’s understanding of current controversies and commonly encountered dilemmas. CME credit is available.

For more information, contact the MPGMG: (310) 312-0531.

UCLA Multicampus Program in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology

VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System
West Los Angeles Healthcare Center (11G)
11301 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90073

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Michelle Eslami Q&A



Michelle S. Eslami, MD, is assistant clinical professor of medicine at UCLA, and coordinator for the VA/UCLA Geriatric Fellowship Program. She was chief resident at the Yale/Waterbury Primary Care Internal Medicine Residency Program, a geriatric fellow at the University of Connecticut, a clinical instructor in Medicine at Yale University, and an assistant professor in geriatrics at UCONN's School of Medicine. In addition to her academic duties, Dr. Eslami is also medical director for the Country Villa Nursing Home in Los Angeles, and Director of Subacute Services for the Rehabilitation Center of Beverly Hills, which is affiliated with UCLA.

Q: What drew you to geriatrics as a specialty? Was there an older family member, friend or professional colleague who inspired you to pursue geriatrics?

A. As a medical student, I had several wonderful interactions with my older patients. I enjoyed general internal medicine and felt the specialty of geriatrics would provide me with an opportunity to do medicine plus – the plus part being caring for the whole patient. I find this part extremely rewarding.

I also had a very special relationship with my grandmother. I have always felt older people are wise and knowledgeable and I've liked my interactions with them – a “shared learning” if you will.

Q: After completing your medical training in Connecticut, you were the staff geriatrician at a subacute facility near Hartford. Why did you choose that path?

A. Before coming to UCLA, I was a clinician educator based in a nursing home very similar to the Jewish Home (UCLA's Jewish Home for the Aging) without the board and care component. As a geriatrician fellow, I had the best experience at this site. They had a job opportunity. I took it.

Q: In addition to fellowship coordinator, you are an assistant clinical professor of medicine/geriatrics, you treat patients at UCLA's Medical Center, you are medical director for Country Villa Mar Vista Nursing Home in Los Angeles, and director of Subacute Services for the Rehab Center of Beverly Hills. How do you balance all these roles? Why do you remain active in the clinical areas, working at Country Villa and the Rehab Center?

A. At times, it can be quite a challenge to juggle these multiple roles. But I enjoy having a broad-based work experience. I enjoyed working in long-term care and now I have the opportunity to take care of older people in an office-based setting, recently discharged from the hospital, and in the nursing home. Really, it allows me to take care of older people in the various settings where they might spend time. I think all geriatricians need to understand these settings – pluses and minuses – and experience this continuum of care. I also enjoy teaching and hope to add to the fellow's experience while they rotate at UCLA.

Q: You received an award for one of 1998's “Best Doctors in America.” Could you tell us a little more about this.

A. Last year I received an award as one of the best doctors in America. This is a peer-generated award. It was a real honor to be noticed and recognized by my colleagues.

Q: As an educator, you have recently lectured on topics ranging from osteoporosis and incontinence, to dementia and drug use in older patients. Do you have a preferred area of research or clinical practice? What about long-term goals in geriatrics?

A. I enjoy both patient care and education. My interests and goals are to continue to combine these roles. I hope I am also a role model in geriatrics for medical students, residents and fellows.

Director's Column

MPGMG Director Dr. David Reuben

At the end of a long week in mid-February when the difficulties of leading a program seemed to far outweigh the benefits, I had a series of experiences, which reaffirmed that all the hard work is worthwhile. The day began with a faculty meeting presentation on pre-operative assessment by our newest faculty member, Dr. Teresa Pham, a clinician educator. It was her first time presenting to the faculty (a notoriously spirited audience) and she handled it with poise and scholarship. Several aspects about the event are particularly noteworthy. First, I initially met this faculty member when she was a first year medical student and took an elective with me. Eight years later, she is a terrific geriatrician and is emerging as an excellent teacher. Second, although I may have some influence in her career choice, her primary role model has been Dr. Michelle Eslami, one of our clinician educators and an assistant professor (see feature article).

Dr. Pham's entry into academic geriatrics provides several lessons that portend well for geriatrics at UCLA and for academic geriatrics, in general. It supports the strategy of maintaining and fostering relationships with medical students who have expressed interest in geriatrics early in their careers. These relationships must be regarded as long-term investments. The timeline from beginning interest to a faculty position may take a decade. We are also learning that the clinician-educator role can be as strong a draw as the

researcher-educator role in attracting superb residents into academic geriatrics. This episode is also important because it signals the emergence of yet another generation of geriatrician role models. Such a chain of successive generations of role models is critical to future recruitment efforts. In many respects, it is easier for residents to set their sights on the professional roles and lifestyles of junior rather than senior faculty.

Later in the day, I attended the first Research Conference devoted entirely to UCLA Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) Career Development and Pilot Awardees (see feature article). In our Pepper Center, we have deliberately attempted to cast a broad net in funding these awards. Although the majority of investigators are junior faculty, the types of research are remarkably diverse ranging from basic to behavioral. In an effort to create an intimate presentation experience for Pepper Center researchers, this Conference is limited to awardees (all of whom are expected to attend) as well as faculty who serve on the Executive Committee. Accordingly, the group is much smaller and consists of experienced and beginning researchers. The format is also somewhat different from other research presentations, both locally and nationally, that these awardees will make. Rather than the polished concise presentation that would occur at a national meeting,

these presentations focus more on the process of the research—what the investigator is thinking, why she or he took this approach, and what problems are being encountered. This promotes far more discussion than most research presentations.

From a director's perspective, what happened at this two-hour session was simply phenomenal. The pride and enthusiasm of each of the investigators in his or her work were obvious. These researchers believed in their work and its importance. Moreover, the science of each presentation was excellent. Whether the research was molecular or applied behavioral, the high caliber of work presented indicates that these researchers will undoubtedly obtain future independent funding. Perhaps the best surprise, however, was the interchange among these faculty, each bringing his or her unique perspective to the discussion. These different perspectives link the relevance of basic science to eventual clinical benefit and clinical research to its fundamental basic science. It is only a short step away for these investigators to begin collaborative translational research. As I begin my seventh year as Director of the UCLA Multicampus Program in Geriatric Medicine, I am delighted that we have not rested on our laurels. Rather, the hard work of the previous and current leadership has created an environment in which successive generations of faculty can arise and assume vital academic roles as educators and researchers. Such faculty are essential if we are to optimize the health and health care of older persons.

UCLA Presents 16th Geriatric Medicine Intensive and Board Review

UCLA's 16th Annual Intensive Course in Geriatric Medicine & Board Review will be held September 22-25, 1999 at the Miramar Sheraton Hotel in Santa Monica. The four-day conference, sponsored by the Multicampus Program in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology and the American Geriatric Society, will offer over 30 lectures, small group meetings, and optional board review sessions. This year's course director is Gail Greendale, MD, associate professor of medicine/

geriatrics and research director of UCLA's Women's Health Center.

Topics will include:

- Biology of Aging: Science and Practice
- Preoperative Assessment
- Principles of Rehabilitation
- Pain Management
- Atrial Fibrillation, Syncope
- Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment of Dementia
- Parkinson's Disease

For the first time, the California Geriatric Education Center will concurrently present the Geriatric Pharmacy Mini-Residency Program. According to Dr. Greendale, offering the geriatric pharmacy program concurrently with the intensive course "will give professionals across geriatric disciplines the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences working with this patient population. It also addresses the growing need to edu-

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NEWS FROM THE CGEC

New Guidelines for Alzheimer's Disease Management

The California Geriatric Education Center (CGEC) is co-presenting the California Guidelines for Alzheimer's Disease Management Implementation Conference on April 14. The CGEC, along with the California Department of Health Services and the Alzheimer's Association of Los Angeles, is part of a workgroup that developed Guidelines to support primary care providers' efforts to manage Alzheimer's disease (AD). The workgroup, comprised of representatives from clinical specialties, healthcare organizations, social service agencies, consumer groups, and academia, includes Janet C. Frank, DrPH, Director of the CGEC. The conference will focus on implementation and use of these guidelines in improving the quality and outcomes of care for AD patients.

NIA Awards UCLA Alzheimer's Disease Center Research Center Status

The UCLA Alzheimer's Disease Center, directed by Dr. Jeffrey Cummings, has been awarded additional research funding by the National Institute on Aging to establish an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). The primary goal of the ADRC will be to augment a basic science research dimension to the Center's existing activities and facilitate interactions between clinical and basic scientists at UCLA. To that end, the ADRC Education Core, utilizing the California Geriatric Education Center led by Janet C. Frank, DrPH, will expand upon current education and information transfer activities. Using a variety of educational and training methods and media, the CGEC translates scientific research results to faculty, students, and community-based health practitioners and consumers.

AGHE Meeting Highlights Need for Geriatric Professional Training in Managed Care

Janet Frank, DrPh, Director of the CGEC, was the organizer and co-presenter for a symposium at February's meeting of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) in St. Louis. "Teaching About Managed Health Care: Critical Issues in Program Development" addressed the need for graduate education programs to include course work and clinical training in managed care organizations to better prepare future geriatric professionals for practicing sound medicine in a managed health care context.

Speaker topics included key content competency areas, consumerism, minority elderly, international health systems, and model programs. The meeting, attended by almost fifty geriatric and gerontology faculty from around the country, concluded with discussion of the future implications of large numbers of older consumers in the changing managed care environment. Program materials, including background articles, are available upon request. Please contact Cheril Miller, (310) 312-0531, cjmiller@ucla.edu.

OAIC Awardees

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hypothesis that ERT-associated attenuation of cortisol reactivity is associated with better memory ability.

SANDRA SIMMONS, PHD, research associate at the Borun Center for Gerontological Research, wrapped up the seminar with a presentation on her pilot study, "Developing nursing home quality-of-life interventions based on preference and satisfaction measures." This study seeks to develop a useful measurement methodology for designing and evaluating interventions to improve nursing home residents' quality of life. Simmons is currently collecting post-intervention data on her project.

The next OAIC research-in-progress seminar is scheduled for April 30.

16th Geriatric Medicine Review

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cate pharmaceutical professionals about geriatric issues." Topics include proper drug therapy for geriatric patients in oncology, psychiatry, and cardiology, as well as pharmacy laws and regulations related to long-term care residents.

For more information, contact Lucio Arruda at (310) 312-0531.

A New Name for the L.A. VA

The Veterans Health Administration is reorganizing the Los Angeles-area VA Medical Centers, and part of the change is a new name: The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLAHS). The Los Angeles sites will now be known as the West Los Angeles Healthcare Center, the Los Angeles Ambulatory Care Center, and the Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center & Nursing Home. The VA Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Centers (GRECC) will retain their current names.

News from the UCLA Center on Aging

The Center on Aging (COA) has received a \$50,000 grant from the Ahmanson Foundation to support the 1999-2000 edition of the Senior Resource Directory and Center Scholars Program.

The Merck Company Foundation is contributing \$25,000 to the COA to support the development of UCLA's undergraduate curriculum in gerontology.

New Research

The COA and the Siegel Life Project are funding two pilot studies on aging:

RITA EFFROS, PHD, professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, "Telomere shortening and T Cell aging".

XIN LIU, MD, PHD, assistant professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, "The Role of d-catenin in Alzheimer's Disease".

The COA and the Montgomery Street Foundation will be funding these additional research studies:

BRUCE KAGAN, MD, PHD, professor of psychiatry and biobehavioral science, "The role of amyloid peptide channels in Alzheimer's and other amyloidoses".

HARRY V. VINTERS, MD, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and **MICHAEL RABINOFF, DO, PHD**, "Investigation of possible association of brain chlamydia pneumoniae infection with Alzheimer's disease".

Upcoming Events

June 23 is the date for the COA's 4th Annual Research Conference on Aging at UCLA's Faculty Center. The one-day conference will feature a poster session and keynote lunch speaker.

Contact Helen Berman (310)794-0676.

New MPGMG Staff

MICHAEL MARION, PHD, has joined the Division of Geriatrics as Senior Statistician, performing all aspects of quantitative research. His background includes teaching statistics at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where he also earned both his MS and PhD in Statistics. Michael is currently collaborating with Gail Greendale, MD, associate professor of medicine and obstetrics and gynecology, on a study of hip fracture risk factors for women.

CHERIL MILLER, MSG, is the new dissemination director for the UCLA Claude Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC), as well as a program representative for the Multicampus Program in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology (MPGMG). In addition to producing the UCLA Geriatric and Gerontology Newsletter, Cheril will develop and expand marketing efforts in other media, including the Internet. She is a graduate of the gerontology master's program of the University of Southern California's Andrus Center.

VA/UCLA Geriatric Fellowship News

Several years ago, the American Council for Graduate Medical Education reduced the required number of years for Geriatric Fellowship accreditation from two years to one. Fellows who are interested in pursuing a second year of academic training in geriatric research must now submit a proposal to the VA/UCLA Fellowship Committee. Recommended proposals are then forwarded to the UCLA Older American Independence Center's Executive Committee for external review. This year, there are two Fellows submitting proposals for their second year of academic training:

HUI HONG, MD: "Pain assessment in the cognitively impaired nursing home resident."

DEBORAH MORAN, MD: "Site specific tuberculin skin test response: A compar-

ative analysis of elderly versus young persons and minorities versus non-minorities."

JULIE SANDOVAL-PERRY, MD, and **MIKE JEONG, DO**, are this year's fellows who have chosen to pursue the UCLA Geriatric Medical Management program. This one-year advanced track, with a special emphasis on long-term care facility management, is designed to prepare physicians to meet the challenges of today's changing health care environment. Topics include principles of management of health care organizations, leadership and decision-making, regulatory issues, and quality assurance.

For more information about the VA/UCLA Geriatrics Fellowship Program, contact Robert Neal at (310) 312-0531.

Pepper Center Announces Awards (continued from Page 5)

psychology. Her research focus as a Pepper Center Career Development Awardee will continue and expand her work in quality-of-life issues for nursing home residents.

- **VERNA PORTER, MD**, is a clinical instructor and fellow in neurogerontology at UCLA's department of neurology. She graduated *Magna Cum Laude* in her microbiology BS program and also received her MD from UCLA. She continued her studies at UCLA, serving her internship in internal medicine, and residency at the department of neurology. Dr. Porter's research focus as a Pepper Center career development awardee is the interrelationship between therapeutic hormone levels and immune changes associated with the pathogenesis of Alzheimer's disease.

New Nursing Home Research Findings

Nursing Home Residents Often Excluded From End-of-Life Treatment Decisions

In a study recently published in the January 1999 *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, UCLA researchers found that while many nursing home residents had written orders to limit life-sustaining medical treatment, a majority of them also reported they had not discussed the treatment options with their physicians, often leaving the decision to a family member or doctor.

Results showed that less than one-third (29%) of the interviewed residents reported any discussion with their physician about life-sustaining treatments. In fact, far more family members reported having such a discussion with the doctor. Researchers say these findings may reflect the residents' desire for family members to make these decisions for them even if they have not lost their decision-making ability due to cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer's disease or stroke.

Overall, this study indicates there are significant communication problems in the decision-making process about life-sustaining treatments for nursing home residents. The authors of the study suggest that although nursing homes have little control over physician behavior, policies and procedures could be revised to provide encouragement to physicians to regularly include resident discussions as part of making life-sustaining treatment decisions.

The study's investigators included Jennifer Levin, MPH, a doctoral candidate at the UCLA School of Public Health; David B. Reuben, MD, Director of the Multicampus Program in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology, UCLA School of Medicine; and researchers at Emory University School of Medicine; the RAND Corporation; the Borun Center for Gerontological Research; and Harvard Medical School. This study was supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

HMOs Can Provide More Primary Care and Reduce Hospital Visits for Nursing Home Residents

In a study comparing primary health care services provided by health maintenance organizations (HMOs) to the services provided by traditional fee-for-service (FFS) Medicare to nursing home residents in the same setting, researchers with UCLA's Division of Geriatrics found that HMO residents received more primary care visits than FFS residents. Moreover, in one health plan, this was associated with fewer emergency room visits and overall hospital utilization rates.

The paper, published in the February 1999 issue of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, describes innovative programs developed by three HMO Medicare risk plans to respond to increasing numbers of members who are frail elderly nursing home residents. All three programs use nurse practitioners or physician's assistants to augment physician care, emphasize managing acute patient problems in the nursing home, and hold discussions with residents and their families about the aggressiveness of medical care (e.g., goals and advance directives). They also all have the common goal of reducing hospital utilization rates. From their analysis, UCLA researchers found that by supplementing physician visits with mid-level providers (nurse practitioners or physician assistants), the HMOs actually provided more primary care visits to residents than did traditional FFS Medicare.

However, the most striking finding of the study, according to researchers, was that HMO nursing home programs have the potential to reduce emergency department and hospital usage compared to the FFS residents. This goal was achieved when the HMO provided the same number of physician visits that non-HMO residents received and supplemented them with an equal number of nurse practitioner or physician assistant visits. This HMO followed a "team model" in which physicians and mid-

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OAIC Research Highlights

Patients Benefit from Innovative Health Care Delivery in Outpatient Setting

In one of the first studies of its kind, UCLA researchers found that an outpatient comprehensive geriatric assessment, coupled with an adherence intervention, can prevent functional and health-related quality-of-life decline among community-dwelling elderly patients with certain specific geriatric conditions.

The randomized clinical trial study, published in the March 1999 *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, involved 365 older adults (average age: 76), with age-related risk factors for falls, urinary incontinence, depression or functional decline, who were then divided into control and treatment groups. The treatment group received a comprehensive geriatric assessment (CGA), consisting of medical, cognitive, mood, sensory, economic, social, and functional health assessments. After fifteen months, researchers found that physical decline had slowed by 8-10 percent in those patients who received the CGA, compared with the control group. The CGA group also demonstrated better energy, social functioning and physical health.

The unique special intervention steps utilized in this study involved both patients and their primary care physicians in improving compliance with the CGA recommendations. Methods included telephone calls, written recommendations, and patient education and empowerment counseling sessions.

According to Dr. David Reuben, principal investigator and chief of UCLA's Division of Geriatrics, the CGA, coupled with the intervention steps, may prove cost-effective and easy to replicate in an HMO outpatient setting. "The next step is to study the costs associated with implementing the CGA. We may find that this health assessment method is a wise financial investment in maintaining the health of seniors."

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Pepper Center Announces Research Awards

UCLA's Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) has awarded funding for two new pilot studies for 1999. For the first time, the OAIC will be funding research for UCLA School of Dentistry faculty, who will be conducting research in the area of bone disease and aging:

- **ICHIRO NISHIMURA, DDS, DMSc, DMD**, is associate professor and director of The Jane and Jerry Weintraub Center for Reconstructive Biotechnology at the School of Dentistry. This research project will address molecular pathogenesis of one of the major age-related diseases, postmenopausal osteoporosis. Nishimura

will focus his research on phenotype expression by osteoblasts at the gene transcription level, and the role of Type IX collagen in bone formation.

- **SOTIRIO TETRADIS, DDS, PHD**, is assistant professor, Division of Diagnostic and Surgical Sciences at the School of Dentistry. Tetradis' pilot study will investigate the relationship between parathyroid hormones and osteoblasts. Understanding the molecular basis of the effects of parathyroid hormone on bone quantity and quality could lead to the design of more effective pharmacological interventions in the treatment of bone diseases

such as osteoporosis.

The OAIC has also announced two new Career Development Awardees for the coming year:

- **SANDRA SIMMONS, PHD**, will be starting as assistant professor, Division of Geriatrics, Department of Medicine, and will be based at UCLA's Borun Center for Gerontological Research. Simmons received her Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies from Pennsylvania State University. Her areas of specialization are gerontology, methodology, and clinical

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Faculty and Staff in the News

RITA EFFROS, PHD, director of the Immunology Core for the UCLA OAIC, and professor of UCLA pathology and laboratory medicine, has recently traveled abroad for presentations on current UCLA studies on immunology and aging. She was the keynote speaker at the British Biotechnology and Bioscience Research Council Special Aging Initiative in Manchester, England. She also spoke on T-cells, telomeres, and telomerase, and insights into their possible role on aging and AIDS, at the Pasteur Institute in Paris.

TED HAHN, MD, UCLA Professor of Medicine and Director of the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinic Center at the West LA VA Medical Center, and **JOHN PETERS, MD**, UCLA Assistant Professor of Medicine and former OAIC career development awardee, recently presented their latest research findings on rat chondrocytes and fibronectins at the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research in San Francisco, and the 1999 Western Regional meetings of the American Federation for Medical Research.

FARHAD PARHAMI, PHD, UCLA Assistant Professor of Medicine/Cardiology, recently presented his latest research findings

on the topic of the molecular mechanisms of vascular calcification at the 10th International Vascular Biology Meeting in Cairnes, Australia. **PARHAMI** and **SIMON JACKSON, PHD**, UCLA Assistant Professor of Medicine/Cardiology, presented their research on vascular and bone cell calcification at the North American Vascular Biology Meeting in San Francisco. Drs. Parhami and Jackson are both OAIC Career Development Award recipients.

JOHN PETERS, MD, has also recently received a five-year Type I Merit Review Award from the Department of Veterans Affairs for \$550,000. This award was based on critical preliminary data Dr. Peters obtained during his pilot study funded by the UCLA OAIC. His research looks at chondrocyte dysfunction and cartilage degeneration in osteoarthritis.

DAVID SOLOMON, MD, Professor Emeritus of Medicine at UCLA, is being recognized with two awards this spring: The American College of Physicians has presented Dr. Solomon with their Laureate Award. He'll also receive the Edward Henderson Award at this year's American Geriatric Society (AGS) meeting in Philadelphia on May 22. He is currently co-directing, with John Burton, the AGS/Hartford Foundation project,

"Increasing Geriatrics Expertise in Non-Primary Care Specialties." Dr. Solomon has also recently contributed a chapter to the upcoming volume of "Handbook of Theories of Aging", which is a tribute to **DR. JAMES BIRREN**, associate director of UCLA's Center on Aging.

WENDY STEIN, MD, Medical Director of the Jewish Home for the Aging, has contributed a chapter to the *Concise Oxford Textbook of Palliative Care*, "Palliative care in the cognitively impaired." Dr. Stein has also recently passed the boards in geriatrics.

BRUCE TETER, PHD, research biologist at the VA Sepulveda GRECC and assistant research neuroscientist at the UCLA School of Medicine, recently received an award for best presentation by a junior faculty member at the Gordon Research Conference. Dr. Teter, an OAIC Career Development Award recipient, was also recently awarded a Type II VA Merit grant for \$250,000 and an Alzheimer's Association pilot research award for \$80,000 to further his research examining ApoE and the cellular basis of Alzheimer's disease.

New Nursing Home Research

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level providers shared the care of patients.

Another major finding was that these programs respond better to the more common problems among nursing home residents such as falls and fevers when compared to traditional FFS Medicare. This finding suggests that the decreases in emergency department and hospital utilization are the result of better on-site care by HMOs.

Because these three HMO programs are at the forefront of designing and implementing primary care programs for long-stay nursing home residents, the results of this study should not be generalized to all HMOs providing care in nursing homes. However, the findings demonstrate that HMO programs for nursing home residents, especially when they provide additional primary care, can reduce emergency department and hospital utilization compared to traditional fee-for-service program models.

The study's primary investigator was David B. Reuben, MD, Director of the Multicampus Program in Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology. Contributing researchers were from Emory University School of Medicine; the RAND Corporation; the Borun Center for Gerontological Research; and Harvard Medical School. This study was supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

OAIC Research Highlights

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The study was supported by the National Institute on Aging, Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center, and the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center-West Los Angeles and Sepulveda. The study was conducted by David B. Reuben, MD, Janet C. Frank, DrPh, Susan H. Hirsch, MPH, Kimberly A. McGuigan, PhD, and Rose C. Maly, MD, MSPH.

OAIC Awardees Present Findings at Inaugural "Pepper Center Research Development Conference"



Back Row (L to R): Dr. David Reuben, Director, OAIC; Sandra Simmons, PhD, Pilot Research Study Awardee (PRS); Simon Jackson, PhD, Career Development Awardee (CDA); Dr. Ted Hahn, Director, Research Development Core. Front row (L to R): Bruce Teler, PhD, CDA; Rita Effros, PhD, Director, Biological Sciences Research Core; Teresa Seeman, PhD, PRS; Dr. Debra Saliba, CDA; Farhad Parhami, CDA.

February 19 marked the beginning of a new quarterly event for UCLA's Older American Independence Center (OAIC), the "Pepper Center Research Development Conference." The conference is an opportunity for current OAIC Career Development and Pilot Research Study awardees to present the latest findings of their OAIC-funded research projects to the OAIC Executive Committee and fellow Pepper Center researchers.

FARHAD PARHAMI, PHD, adjunct assistant professor of medicine/cardiology, and an OAIC Career Development Award recipient, led the presentations with an update on his research findings about the basis of osteoporosis. His research suggests that age-related osteoporosis might in part be related to the adverse effects of oxidized serum lipids on bone cell formation. Parhami's current findings also indicate that aging processes may lead to decreased bone cell and increased fat cell formation in skeletal tissue.

The next presenter, **SIMON JACKSON, PHD**,

assistant professor of medicine/ cardiology, is also a current OAIC Career Development Award recipient. His research examines the molecular mechanisms by which oxidized lipids adversely affect the maintenance of bone and other important tissues as they relate to the aging process. Jackson's research data suggest that common processes may disorder normal cell formation and activity in a variety of tissues including bone, cartilage and muscle.

TERESA SEEMAN, PHD, associate professor of medicine/geriatrics, discussed her pilot study, "ERT: Does it protect against increase in HPA axis reactivity?" The hypothesis being examined is whether ERT helps protect against decline in cognitive functioning, including memory performance, in postmenopausal women through an attenuation of hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis reactivity resulting from increased levels of estrogen. The study is also testing the

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