The South Carolina Center for Gerontology is a consortium of Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, the Medical University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University, the University of South Carolina, Winthrop University, Lander University, Department of Health and Human Services, AARP South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control, South Carolina State Budget & Control Board, South Carolina Hospital Association, and South Carolina Silver Haired Legislature. For more information about the Center, please visit our website: http://cosw.sc.edu/research/12-research/280-south-carolina-center-for-gerontology

2016 ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

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Director’s Message

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings. As you know, February has been decreed as Vulnerable Adult Awareness Month in South Carolina to draw attention to an often hidden reality. Recent studies show the prevalence of elder abuse ranges from 7% to 10% of the elderly population in the United States. Elder abuse may take the form of physical, emotional, material, medical, and sexual abuse, as well as financial exploitation. Elder abuse occurs in various settings, ranging from one’s own home to the community and long-term care facilities. The perpetrators are often spouses, partners, adult children, and other individuals close-by.

Although states have Adult Protective Services (APS) agencies, an extremely high number of cases of elder mistreatment or abuse are undetected or unreported. One study has found that only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse is reported to the authorities, while another study uncovered that for every elder abuse case known to agencies or programs, there were 24 unknown cases.

In the article “Battling Elder Abuse,” Dr. Macie Smith and Ms. Brenda Stalzer discuss how the Office for the Study of Aging at the University of South Carolina is combating elder abuse through various means, such as research, awareness-raising, advocacy, training, and education. The ultimate goal is to enhance the well-being of a population we all deeply care about.

Best regards,

Rita Jing-Ann Chou, PhD, MSSW
Hartford Geriatric Social Work Faculty Scholar
Associate Professor
College of Social Work
University of South Carolina
Grants

Gajadhar, R. (Palmetto Health) Geriatric Academic Career Award, HRSA, 500,000. (2015)


Smith, M. (University of South Carolina/School of Medicine). Geriatric Education Center. Palmetto State Geriatric Education Center. $5,000 for Dementia Dialogues T.I.P.S (January 2016).

Presentations


Scharf, S. (Palmetto Health) Driving and Aging. First Year Medical Students (April 14, 2015) USC School of Medicine, Columbia, SC

Scharf, S. (Palmetto Health) Driving and Seniors. NICHE, (December 4, 2015) Baptist Hospital, Columbia, SC.


Publications


Research Conference & Forum

12th Annual Aging Research Day: “Sensory Systems in Aging”

South Carolina Aging Research Network

Friday, February 26, 2016 - 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM

Marriott Hotel, Lockwood Boulevard, Charleston, SC

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Nicolas Bazan

Dr. Bazan is internationally recognized for his contributions to neuroscience and research in vision and ophthalmology, as well as an author, educator, mentor, developer, music enthusiast, and art lover. Dr. Bazan’s novel (Una Vida) was adapted into the award winning film, Of Mind and Music, which was a large part of the inspiration for this year’s theme on sensory systems.

Session Chairpersons & Speakers

Lotta Granholm, DDS, PhD, MUSC
Judy Dubno, PhD, MUSC
Xue Z. Liu, MD, PhD, University of Miami
Baerbel Rohrer, PhD, MUSC
Cheryl Dye, PhD, Clemson University
Chris Gregory, MS, PhD, MUSC
Ellen Vincent, PhD, Clemson University
Renata Leite, PhD, MUSC
Debra Krotish, PhD, University of South Carolina
Victor Hirth, MD, MHA, CMD, FACP, AGSF, Palmetto Health
Johnell Brooks, PhD, Clemson University
Stacey Pierce, Live @ Home Technologies
Baerbel Rohrer, PhD, MUSC
Deborah Deas, MD, MPH, MUSC
Healthy Aging Forum:
A Focus on Brain Health

On December 9, 2015 the CDC-funded South Carolina Healthy Brain Research Network (SC-HBRN) hosted the Healthy Aging Forum: A Focus on Brain Health at USC. The objectives of the forum were:

- To promote awareness about cognitive health, cognitive impairment, and Alzheimer’s disease.
- To describe current research related to physical activity, nutrition, and cognitive health.
- To foster collaborations and networking opportunities for researchers, students, and community.

Additional information about the forum and the SC-HBRN can be found here: http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/projects/braincenter.html. (PI: Daniela Friedman; Co-PIs: Sara Wilcox and Sue Levkoff).

A Healing Garden for Veterans – Young and Old

The Office of Patient Centered Care made a Healing Garden on the WJB Dorn Veterans Administration Medical Center campus a reality in 2013. Healing gardens provide a holistic approach that is important in the continuum of care for the total person—mind and body. It is also important for staff, as they too must be fit in mind and body to care for the Veterans we serve.

The Healing Garden is part of the overall initiative in keeping with the Veteran’s Health Administration vision “To provide Veterans the world-class benefits and services they have earned - and to do so by adhering to the highest standards of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.”

As part of the VAMC patient centered care initiative, WJB Dorn VAMC sought and received grant monies to convert an outdoor area on campus into a beautiful garden with arbors, water fountain, plants and multiple seating options. Through the vision and commitment of a dedicated team, the Healing Garden was created and continues to provide a sanctuary for mindful reflection and healing.

The team included: a Dorn Engineer who created an inspirational and unique design, Veteran Service Organizations who shared ideas and support, the Dorn VA Mental Health Veteran Advisory Committee for valuable ideas and feedback, two gifted Veterans who shared their talents of artist and poetry, VAMC staff and the many community partners who contributed plants, time and talent to achieve and maintain this place of beauty.

Veteran’s Administration Medical Centers have shared a common mission since the time of President Abraham Lincoln's promise: “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans.

The Healing Garden is a visible reminder of Mission and Vision as we strive to make our world the best possible for our Veterans who returned...
home more than 60 years ago and to those who return home today. It is a place of sanctuary from distractions and stressors, allowing opportunity to just “be”.

WJB Dorn VA Medical Center embraced the opportunity to provide our Veterans, their families and our staff with a space dedicated to peace and healing; in honor of all Veterans, past, present and future.

Karen L. Scott, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Associate Nurse Executive CLC/GEC
WJB Dorn VA Medical Center Columbia, SC

Series on “Medicine and What Matters in the End”

In May and June of 2015, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Brevard, NC, sponsored a four-part series inspired by Atul Gawande’s book Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End, led by the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore. The series included speakers and panelists from a range of disciplines including palliative care, pastoral care and theology, an elder law attorney, and an introduction to the Village-to-Village Network. St. Mark United Methodist Church in Seneca, SC, is sponsoring five-part weekly series during Lent this year, running February 17 to March 16, 2016, inspired by the same book. Anyone interested in gerontology, aging well, and care in the later years and at the end of life would do well to read this book and engage others in discussion of its implications for health care, policy, and families.

Robert E. McKeown, PhD, FACE
Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Arnold School of Public Health
University of South Carolina

Experiential Activity in an Aging Course

In the Fall 2015 Semester, students enrolled in SOWK 779- Advanced Social Work Interventions with Aging Participation participated in an immersion activity at a local retirement community. In this course, students are introduced to direct advanced practice in aging. Included in the competence assessment of skill acquisition are components such as engagement, assessment, intervention planning, implementation and practice evaluation.

Students in the class. L to R: Richard Neldon, Dana Daniel, Chantelle Broughton, Juliann Sandler, Hannah Goldman, and Eloise Smith.

Students in this course were challenged to create an interactive activity that would be implemented in a local retirement facility. Students were provided client assessments based on participation levels in areas that included but were not limited to: physical, cognitive, emotional, and motivational levels for the identified group of clients. Due to confidentiality, students were not provided individual names, rather a group summary. Students were then asked to utilize this summary to create an appropriate activity that could be implemented either individually or in a group environment. Each student was required to
contribute various levels of intervention so that as clients presented themselves for the activity, an appropriate activity would be available to meet the needs of the clients.

Students were greeted warmly by administrative staff and then presented to residents to begin activity. Staff was present and available during the activity. The activity included: 1) a sensory box; 2) clothing props; and 3) a snack station. The mobile activity stations were specifically designed to stimulate disclosure, discussion, memory recall and participation at any and all levels. Students introduced themselves and then began connecting with residents. Notably, residents responded well to all stations as students moved through the group.

Student insights shared from evaluation of the group activity included: the importance of rapport; starting where the client is; variation in skill level mandates flexibility in activities to assure mastery by participants and when in doubt, food is always a good choice.

Nicole Cavanagh, PhD., Instructor. SOWK 779 Advanced Social Work Interventions, College of Social Work, University of South Carolina.

Battling Elder Abuse

Television Interview OnPoint! with Cynthia Hardy on WACH Fox 57.
(January 31, 2016).

Cynthia Hardy, Television Personality, recently invited Dr. Macie Smith, Program Development and Training Manager for the Arnold School’s Office for the Study of Aging (OSA), and Brenda Stalzer, Assistant Director and Training Coordinator for the South Carolina Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem Program (SCVAGAL) within OSA, on her WACH FOX 57 program, Onpoint!, to discuss elder abuse. Hardy sought their expertise not only because they do research on elder abuse, but because OSA works with it every day and tackles it head on. Because of this leadership, they are considered a respected authority in the field.

The National Center on Elder Abuse estimates that one in 10 people over the age of 60 experiences elder mistreatment, which translates to nearly six million cases every year. According to Dr. Smith, this number is actually much higher due to underreporting. And as the U.S. population continues to age, this number will only increase over time.

Dr. Smith reported that elder abuse is one of the most overlooked public health crises in our country. There are potentially thousands, if not millions, more cases than those that are currently reported. The present generation of the elderly population tends to be a silent one; moreover, 90 percent of abuse and neglect cases are committed by family members or others in positions of trust, so there is an element of fear of retaliation.

Dr. Smith goes on to report that due to their cognitive decline, people living with dementia
are at an even higher risk. Families and caregivers don’t know how to handle some of those challenging behaviors. The cost of caregiving in the U.S is another challenge that Dr. Smith emphasizes. Over 15 million caregivers are providing more than 17 billion hours of unpaid care for family members and loved ones with dementia and other chronic illnesses.

Indeed, another problem that the OSA team sees is lack of awareness about elder abuse in general and particularly about available resources. Brenda Stalzer reported that people just don’t know that there are resources out there that can help them provide care for their loved ones.

OSA’s SCVAGAL program offers an excellent example of an important resource for this population. The program recruits and trains volunteers to serve as Guardians ad Litem for vulnerable adults who are under the custody of the Department of Social Services—those who have been abused or neglected or exploited—by representing their best interests.

For their part, OSA serves as a clearinghouse of expertise and knowledge regarding available programs. They also offer their own training, research, evaluation, and program development. For example, their nation-wide Dementia Dialogues program is a free education program for family members, caregivers and professionals working with individuals living with dementia. With funding from the Palmetto State Geriatric Education Center, OSA recently created Dementia Dialogues T.I.P.S., online videos to help caregivers and family members identify quick tips to improve the quality of life for love ones living with dementia.

OSA definitely has a unique position in the field of aging because of their research, program evaluation, program development, and education and training. OSA’s overarching goal is to improve long term care and supports for South Carolina’s aging population; and to afford them the opportunity to age in place successfully. As an important first step, OSA and other aging stakeholders have successfully secured a proclamation from Governor Nikki Haley that decrees February as Vulnerable Adult Awareness Month in S.C.

A full article on this interview can be found at http://www.sph.sc.edu/news/elder_abuse.html

The video of the interview has been loaded on YouTube. Here is the link, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_J-MygPB94.

Macie P. Smith, Ed.D. & Brenda Stalzer, LMSW. Office for the Study of Aging, University of South Carolina.
We are excited to present this electronic 2016 issue of the Aging Matters Newsletter. We welcome your suggestions and comments. If you wish to submit aging related items for future issues please e-mail them to Dr. Rita J. Chou at rjchou@sc.edu.

Aging Matters, the newsletter of the South Carolina Center for Gerontology, College of Social Work, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208

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