I remember in my interview in March 2012, Dr. Brummel-Smith asking me how I felt about working with a wide variety of people from students, faculty, older adults, and community partners. My response is still true today – I feel privileged. Each offers their own perspective and experiences that have helped shape my understanding of how research, education, and service are valued at the College of Medicine. Everyone is living and breathing our mission – all passionate about what they do, the research they conduct, the courses they teach, and the path they are on. Since my first day in the Department of Geriatrics, I have had the honor of working with many amazing individuals and being a part of research projects, grants, and educational activities that will change the lives of those we serve.

On behalf of the Department of Geriatrics, it is my pleasure to share with you many more faculty and student achievements. In this issue of the Research and Scholarship Newsletter, we highlight the accomplishments of Tamara Marryshow Granados and update you on her career path. Look for this In the Spotlight. Under Updates, you can read about the mentorship of our medical students' summer research projects as well as the success of the Third Annual Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Conference. Also, one of my most favorite things in the newsletter is the showcasing of artwork created by local artists from the Tallahassee Senior Center. I hope you enjoy.

Sincerely,
LaVon

Glacien Lake at Yosemite by Joan Kanan
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Announcements

Deck the Halls: Tallahassee Senior Center Fundraiser

Friday, December 1st at 6:30 pm, the Tallahassee Senior Center is kicking off the holiday season with the Foundation’s premiere fundraiser, Deck the Halls. This holiday gala featuring a wreath and silent auction, live music, and festive food and drinks is the largest annual fundraising effort to support the senior center’s programs. The mission of these programs is to encourage active living and successful longevity in independent adults ages 50 and up.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit the Tallahassee Senior Center Foundation’s website.

Grand Rounds: Medical Student Research Presentations

Four College of Medicine’s Division of Research summer research fellowship award winners will present their findings today at the Grand Rounds session from 4 to 5 pm in the College of Medicine Atrium. The students and their topics include:

- “LARP6/PIH1D3 Interaction as a Possible Cause of Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia” by Ryan Earwood, M2
- “Primary Care Physicians Comfort, Knowledge, and Training level with LGBTQ Patient’s Sexual History” by Christopher Hahn, M2
- “Racial and Socioeconomic Variation in Caregiver Knowledge of Safe Infant Sleep Spaces” by Scott Nelson, M2
- “The effects of chemotherapy on cognitive behavior and neurogenesis in an animal model of pre- and post-menopausal females” by Samantha Pavlock, M2

New this year, the Division will also be hosting a poster session before the Grand Rounds session featuring all of the summer research fellows from 12 to 1 pm in the Atrium. The winner will be announced during the Grand Rounds presentations that afternoon. For more information, please visit the Grand Rounds website or email Carson Taylor at carson.taylor@med.fsu.edu.

Professor Kapp Appointed Academic Advisor to ABPLA

The American Board of Professional Liability Attorneys (ABPLA) has appointed Professor Marshall Kapp, geriatrics faculty member and Director of the Center for Innovative Collaboration in Medicine and Law, as their academic advisor. The mission of the ABPLA is to board certify attorneys in the areas of medical malpractice and legal malpractice based on the standards of experience, ethics, education, examination and excellence. In this role, Professor Kapp will review the questions on the written certification examination administered to applicants for accuracy, clarity, and fairness.

Alzheimer’s Project’s 2017 Forget Me Not Walk

Alzheimer’s Project (AP), a non-profit organization funded by grants and donations, is hosting it’s annual “Forget-Me-Not Walk” on November 5th in Cascades Park from 1 to 3 pm. The event will benefit AP’s mission of providing free assistance to persons with memory disorders and their caregivers in the Big Bend area. To sponsor, register, or start a team go to www.firstgiving.com/AlzheimersProject/Alzheimers.
Throughout her educational career, Tamara Marryshow Granados (Class of 2017) has had the desire and drive to reach out to the underserved, to learn people’s stories, and to make a difference in their lives. Her calling to medicine and interest in geriatrics has echoed the same sentiment.

Tamara’s passion for service began during her undergraduate years at Florida International University, where she led efforts to address the lack of HIV/AIDS awareness and education in Miami-Dade County. She cites this work with HIV patients and their families as one of many experiences leading to her decision to go to medical school. Her path to the Florida State University College of Medicine was confirmed by a mission that paralleled her own.

Tamara’s first experience in geriatrics came through the Senior Mentor program, where she was captured by the humble life of a local, 72-year-old woman, her reflections on life, and thoughts toward her future. This led to her pursuit of research in geriatrics. Tamara was awarded the Charles R. Mathews Summer Research Scholarship to work on a faculty-led study titled “Exploring Depression in Older Adults, Barriers to Diagnosis and Treatment.” “It was truly a pleasure to work on this project, to be given the rare privilege to visit individuals in their homes and to interview them on their attitudes and thoughts on not just depression but their own lives,” Tamara said. “Like any of us really, they all had a story to tell, a life to share.” She later presented her work at the Florida Geriatrics Society’s 2015 Annual Meeting, where she was awarded the David T. Lowenthal Founders Award for excellence in geriatric research.

During her undergraduate clinical rotations, Tamara worked in a community health center. “I was struck by the multitude of patients who walked miles to get to their appointments. Often, they were tired, sweating in the Florida heat and struggling with a myriad of complex medical issues because getting to the physician was challenging and often put off until dire,” she explained. Her experiences solidified her ambition of providing health care to those who struggle to find access to it. “In family medicine, at a local level, I will improve access to care for these individuals, meeting them where they are, and delivering them care how they can best receive it.”

Her dedication to this goal was reflected in a number of honors Tamara received upon graduation. Tamara was nominated by faculty to join the Gold Humanism Honor Society, honoring medical students for demonstrated excellence in clinical care, leadership, compassion, and dedication to service. Her patient-centered approach led her to receive the Florida Geriatrics Society Award for Outstanding Student in Geriatrics. Requiring a nomination by geriatrics faculty, this award is given to students who demonstrate a patient-centered approach to problem solving and patient management for older adults and recognition of the distinct benefit it gives older patients, their families, and caregivers. Tamara’s leadership skills were also recognized by the Myra M. Hurt Leadership in Medicine Award.

Tamara is currently completing a family medicine residency at the Alpert Medical School at Brown University, which she chose to expand her outlook and gain knowledge she can bring back to Florida. There she continues to champion FSU College of Medicine’s commitment and her own dedication to primary care. “The goal of residency,” she said, “is to push myself to become the kind of physician that can be worthy of the trust our patients place in us and to serve as an advocate at the regional, state, and national levels for primary care and its often unrealized value.”
Everyone wants to age well and have a longer, healthier life. But how? Research has shown a link between personality and certain health conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease and cardiovascular health that can impact longevity. Conscientiousness for example has been shown to have positive effects on health outcomes while neuroticism has negative effects. Studies have also shown that behavioral interventions can help improve health outcomes and promote healthy aging across the lifespan. But what if we could find ways to intervene on maladaptive aspects of personality traits at their origin?

College of Medicine researchers, Dr. Angelina Sutin, Dr. Antonio Terracciano, and colleagues, were granted federal funding to search for the origin of personality traits. They hope to discover the risk factors that contribute to the development of personality traits that have the greatest effect on healthy aging. Such knowledge could lead to the development of behavioral interventions, which would be implemented early in life, to change health outcomes in adulthood. With this research, they will integrate large-scale longitudinal datasets to identify how prenatal and early life experiences shape personality and health from the nursery to the nursing home.

“This project really began with thinking about where personality traits come from. It makes more sense to intervene at the source rather than later in life.”

- Dr. Angelina Sutin

For more information on Dr. Sutin’s and Dr. Terraciano’s project, see the College of Medicine’s press release.
The success of statins in the prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) has led the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) to create new recommendations for the use of statins, specifically for CVD prevention in patients age 40-75 with a ≥ 7.5% 10-year CVD risk. However, they have concluded that there is insufficient evidence to recommend statin use in patients >75 years old.

Under the guidance of Dr. Paul Katz, first-year medical student Michael Penfold created a study that would employ a progressive case disclosure that would survey experts in the fields of geriatrics and cardiology. This survey would assess if there is an expert consensus on statin usage in the prevention of CVD in adults 76 years of age and older. Look for the study’s findings at the 2018 Research Fair.

Numerous studies have shown that living in a food desert has a negative effect on health. Food deserts are geographic areas characterized by limited access to affordable and healthful foods. Florida has an overall food insecurity rate of 16.2%. In Leon County, this rate is higher (21.8%). This study aimed to explore the relationship between living in a food desert and receiving preventative health screenings.

Under the guidance of Ms. Karen Myers (Family Medicine and Rural Health) and Dr. John Agens (Geriatrics), first-year medical students Ellen Ann Sockman and Tarvis Peacock surveyed adults age 40 and over about their history of preventative health screenings, barriers to these services, and residence location. Look for the study’s findings at the 2018 Research Fair.

Individuals living with dementia often exhibit increases in aggressive behavior and agitation as their condition progresses. To control these symptoms, clinicians frequently prescribe antipsychotic medications, but these medications are often ineffective or result in significant adverse side effects. Because of this, more beneficial treatments are desired.

Derek Schwabe-Warf, with Dr. Antonio Terracciano, assisted with the collection and preliminary analysis of data. Participants with cognitive impairment and dementia as well as their caregivers were interviewed about the participant’s current behaviors. Blood samples were collected from participants and later analyzed for uric acid concentrations. See the study’s preliminary findings on October 12 in the Atrium.
Third Annual Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Conference

National leaders with expertise in a variety of disciplines presented at the 3rd Annual Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Conference held on August 25th at Westminster Oaks in Tallahassee. Attendance was interdisciplinary, including social workers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, medical directors, and nursing home administrators. The topics explored included the medical foster home, transitions of care, value-based purchasing, physician engagement, and the interdisciplinary medical team.

Sponsored by LeadingAge Florida, the Florida Medical Directors Association, Westminster Communities of Florida, the Florida Health Care Association, and FSU’s College of Medicine, the conference was very well-received. Discussions sparked during presentations continued in interactive workshops where presenters introduced application-based activities for participants to dive deeper into their subject. Enlightening, compelling, and innovative were a few ways participants described their experience in this educational activity.

Florida Geriatrics Society

The Department continues to have a presence in the Florida Geriatrics Society. Dr. Niharika Suchak serves as the Society’s President, bringing together healthcare professionals and students who have an interest in improving geriatric care through clinical practice.

During the 2017 FGS annual conference in Orlando, last year’s recipients of the Charles R. Mathews Geriatrics Education and Research Scholarship presented their research findings at a student poster session. This study, which surveyed Florida medical schools and residency programs about pain management education, found that a large percentage of faculty, students, and residents did not feel that their education equips them with a sufficient level of competence to treat patients with non-cancer, chronic pain. Read more in the published article.

Assessing Care for Vulnerable Elders (ACOVE) Initiative Update

In an effort to develop medical provider-centric quality indicators for post-acute and long-term, Dr. Paul Katz helped lead a seven-member international team of experts to identify and adapt existing quality measures to competencies for attending physicians in the NH. These 26 competencies were recently developed by AMDA-The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. Candidate measures, many originally developed under the Assessing Care for Vulnerable Elders initiative (ACOVE) were reviewed by a technical expert panel in June of this year. Ninety four QMs were ultimately selected as both valid and feasible using the RAND modified Delphi approach.

Following specification and pilot testing of these QMs, the stage will be set to assess the relationship between selected QMs and important outcomes in the NH such as re-hospitalization rates and the use of antipsychotics.
The North and Central Florida Workforce Enhancement Partnership (NCF-GWEP) is making an impact on communities across Florida. With our partners, we have:

- Trained hundreds of nurses and nursing assistants working in senior living communities about pain management and influenza.
- Empowered over 450 family caregivers to take better care of themselves with the Powerful Tools for Caregivers program.
- Improved four internal and family medicine residency programs by developing quality improvement projects and educational materials that incorporate more geriatric principles.
- Modified workflow protocols in a Federally Qualified Health Center to improve goal-directed care for older patients by training clinicians and administrative staff on geriatrics assessments, advance care planning, and medication adherence in older adults.
- Increased the awareness of over 400 students in medicine, nursing, social work, and pharmacy about the value of interprofessional teams and training.
- Worked with an interdisciplinary team of students to develop health-topic presentations that have been delivered to more than 670 older adults by medical students during their geriatrics clerkship.

Contact Nicolette Castagna, NCF-GWEP Coordinator if you would like more information.

Bridge Student Research: Maheen Islam

Maheen Islam, Class of 2021

The Bridge to Clinical medicine major within the Master’s Program in Biomedical Sciences is a program created to provide a bridge to medical school for hand-picked students from underserved or minority populations from rural or inner-city communities. Part of the program includes a research experience that is community-based, and this year, bridge student Maheen Islam worked with Dr. Antonio Terracciano on a project titled “Personality and Cognition Among Older Adults”. The goal of her study was to determine potential associations between different personality traits and the level of cognition in older adults.

Maheen began working with Dr. Terracciano during her undergraduate degree at Florida State as she was drawn to research involving human interaction, especially with older adults. When asked about the most valuable lesson she learned in completing this project, Maheen described a greater appreciation for the research process and the patience it requires. The larger purpose of studies like hers, Maheen explained, is to understand our susceptibility to cognitive decline as we get older and potentially identify changes to help diagnose this decline earlier.
AGS Lunch and Learn

In partnership with The Office of Faculty Development, the Department of Geriatrics faculty hosted the seventh annual AGS Lunch and Learn where faculty presented new developments and resources from the 2017 Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Geriatrics Society, held in May this year in San Antonio, TX.

Dr. John Agens spoke about developments in new CPT codes for non-face-to-face care, which provide a more comprehensive way to bill for services beyond an office visit, such as coordination with home and community-based providers. Echoing AGS's efforts to define and promote healthy aging, Dr. Alice Pomidor discussed healthy aging support strategies for both clinical and community settings. More information on AGS's efforts in healthy aging can be found at www.healthinaging.org.

Both Dr. Paul Katz and Dr. Lisa Granville presented new tools available to practitioners in geriatrics. Dr. Katz presented new curriculum on competencies for post-acute and long-term care medicine, which outline best practices in a number of domains for physicians within this continuum. This curriculum can be purchased at http://www.paltc.org/competencies-curriculum-post-acute-and-long-term-care-medicine. Dr. Granville gave information on Geriatrics Fast Facts, which are clinically actionable reports on geriatric topics across medical disciplines. These short reports can be accessed for free at www.geriatricsfastfacts.com.

Resource Highlights

Faculty Project Planner

Through the FSU Office of Faculty Development and Advancement, faculty and their collaborators have access to an online project management tool called Faculty Project Planner. This tool helps with the management of complex research and creative projects over time. In addition to project management functions, this tool can also be used for mentoring purposes.

With the Faculty Project Planner, faculty create a project, add details, collaborators, steps, and tasks. Uploading documents, commenting, and reporting are other available functions. Both internal and external (to FSU) collaborators can be added to projects. Specific roles are assigned and include 1) lead collaborator, 2) collaborator, and 3) mentor. After being added to a project, all collaborators receive an email with a direct link to access the project. There is no cost for using this tool.
Publications and Presentations

Faculty Publications

Marshall Kapp, JD, MPH


Paul Katz, MD


Alexandra Nowakowski, PhD


Nowakowski ACH (2017). Death Check: Doing Life and Research with Chronic Autoimmune Disease, Negotiating the Emotional Challenges of Conducting Deeply Personal Research in Health (pp. 3-13). Boca Raton, FL: Routledge.

Alice Pomidor, MD


Antonio Terracciano, PhD


Faculty Special Mentions

**Alice Pomidor, MD**


**Faculty Presentations**

**John Agens, MD**

Agens J. “Teaching students about cognitive assessments,” at the Orlando, Ft. Pierce, Pensacola, and Daytona FSU College of Medicine regional campuses, August and September 2017.

**Marshall Kapp, JD, MPH**

Kapp MB. “Honoring the Choices of Nursing Home Residents While Practicing Good Risk Management,” at the XXVth International Congress on Law and Mental Health sponsored by the International Academy of Law and Mental Health, Prague, Czech Republic, July 2017.

**Antonio Terracciano, PhD**
Terracciano A. “Cognitive Impairment, Dementia, and Personality Stability Among Older Adults” at APS Annual Convention, APS, Boston, MA, June 2017.

Terracciano A. “Personality and Insomnia” at Biennial Meeting of the Association for Research in Personality, Association for Research in Personality, Sacramento, CA, June 2017.


**Rough Water by Nancy Maudlin**

The Department of Geriatrics would like to thank the Tallahassee Senior Center and the artists who exhibit their artwork at the FSU College of Medicine. Some of the pieces displayed can be found on the cover and pages 11 &12 of this newsletter. For more information on the art or artists, call Ms. Regina Scott, Administrative Coordinator, at (850) 645-6575.