Aging is something we all do. It’s a matter of how well we do it. As we get older, almost every aspect of life reveals new and pressing questions. Some questions are obvious: Who will take care of us? Will we get the medicines and treatments we need? Can we afford them? Other societal questions are equally compelling: Where will older Americans live? What social roles will they have? How will technology change their lives?

“Aging happens slowly and it’s easy to postpone addressing these questions because it’s not a crisis of the moment,” said Dilip Jeste, MD, senior associate dean for healthy aging and senior care, Distinguished Professor of psychiatry and neurosciences, and director of the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging. “But one day we’ll look around and suddenly realize that almost everybody is old and we still don’t have answers to these questions. That’s why we have to start talking now.”

Dr. Jeste and colleagues are trying to lead that conversation—and in the process make UC San Diego a national, and perhaps international, hub for addressing the challenges and opportunities of an older America and world. By 2030, one in five Americans will be sixty-five years or older. For the first time, older adults will outnumber children. Right now, there are 550 million people older than sixty-five worldwide, and in 2050 that number is projected to be two billion.

The UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging hosted its first national think tank on aging from November 14 to 16. National and international experts discussed the demographics of aging, new geriatric health-care models, an older workforce, and senior-centric technologies. The think tank culminated on Sunday, November 16, with a free public seminar attended by four hundred people from the community.

In addition to Dr. Jeste, other speakers at the seminar were Dan Blazer II, MD, MPH, PhD, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University; Kim Goodsell, cofounder of ProAbility WalkArt; Kiang J. Liu, PhD, professor of preventive medicine—epidemiology and geriatrics at Northwestern University; and William Vega, PhD, provost professor and executive director of the Roybal Institute on Aging at the University of Southern California.

The aging demographic in the United States is driven by baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964. The first boomers reached age sixty-five and retirement in 2011, and their numbers have steadily increased since then. By 2030, there will be more than seventy-three million Americans age sixty-five or older. Perhaps more astoundingly, by 2040 there will be more than twenty-eight million Americans aged eighty or older—three times the number in 2000.

“Older boomers are different than previous generations of seniors,” said Dr. Jeste. “On the plus side, they are more highly educated, more health conscious, more activist. On the minus side, they tend to have higher rates of depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse.”

These newer older Americans, he said, have higher expectations of later life: “They are not just going to get old, retire, and call it a

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Free Public Lectures

FEBRUARY

Arthritis: From Snake Oil to Science and Success
Gregory D. Middleton, MD
Associate Clinical Professor
UC San Diego Health System
February 18, 2015, 5:30 p.m.
Garren Auditorium, Biomedical Sciences Building, UC San Diego

MARCH

Managing Menopause
Kathryn Macaulay, MD
Clinical Professor of Reproductive Medicine; Director, UC San Diego Menopause Program
UC San Diego Health System
March 18, 2015, 5:30 p.m.
Garren Auditorium, Biomedical Sciences Building, UC San Diego

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FEBRUARY’S LECTURE

Learn more about arthritis from Gregory D. Middleton, MD, associate clinical professor of medicine at UC San Diego. He is a rheumatologist specializing in the nonsurgical care of patients with joint and muscle pain associated with rheumatological disorders such as osteoarthritis.

Dr. Middleton went to medical school at Boston University and completed his residency and fellowship at UT Southwestern in Dallas. He joined the team at UC San Diego after almost ten years as chief of medical specialties at Southwestern Medical Associates in Las Vegas.

Dr. Middleton has treated many former and recreational athletes who strive to maintain an active lifestyle in spite of certain muscle and joint challenges. “Staying active in the right way is probably as big a factor in pain as the amount of damage to the joint,” he said.

A cross-country runner in high school and coxswain for the Boston University rowing team, Dr. Middleton currently walks and practices yoga. He also writes fiction, composes music, plays keyboard and drums, and is an amateur chef. He became a physician out of a keen interest in science and the desire to help patients maintain a satisfying and active lifestyle.

LECTURES ON TV

Sexuality and Aging
February 12, 8:00 p.m.
February 13, 10:00 p.m.

As we grow older, many of us continue an active, satisfying sex life. Learn more about aging and sex from psychiatrist Dan Sewell, MD. For the past three years, Dr. Sewell has been named a Top Doc in San Diego. He currently has a number of roles at UC San Diego, including medical director of the Senior Behavioral Health Program, director of the Geropsychiatry Fellowship Program, codirector of the Memory Aging and Resilience Clinic, and associate director for the UC San Diego Hartford Foundation Center of Excellence in Geriatric Psychiatry.

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Directions to the Garren Auditorium from I-5 North or South
- Exit La Jolla Village Drive and drive west on La Jolla Village Drive.
- Turn right onto Villa La Jolla Drive.
- Go straight into Gilman Parking Structure.
- From Gilman Parking Structure, cross the street toward the Stein Clinical Research Building.
- Cross the lawn to the Medical Teaching Facility Building (MTF).
- Walk under the MTF bridge. Continue along the sidewalk to enter the Biomedical Sciences Building through the large sliding glass doors.
- Turn left at the first hallway. Garren Auditorium is in Room 1105.

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Note: If you park outside of Gilman Parking Structure or do not display your permit, you will receive a ticket. If you have a disabled person placard, you do not need a permit and are allowed to park in any handicap or metered space.

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Linda Balducci has been on the go all her life and, at the age of sixty-five, shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon. Better yet, she enjoys sharing her energy with others as a personal trainer and exercise instructor.

Linda was born Linda Flachsland in 1949 in Syracuse, New York. Like many children in those days, she loved being active outdoors. Even though no one in her family was athletic, Linda was and did well in physical education, especially tumbling. “From the seventh grade on, I knew I wanted to be a PE teacher,” she said.

In high school, Linda played intramural sports, including championship badminton, and was a cheerleader. “I was voted the most school spirited and physically fit,” she said. That school spirit still shows as she helps plan her class’s fifty-year reunion for 2016. After high school, Linda attended Northwest Missouri State University, majoring in physical education and minoring in recreation. She was active in the Phi Mu sorority, one of the oldest in the country.

Linda then moved back to New York State and started teaching at a junior high school outside Syracuse. “That was January of ’71 and I earned $7,100 a year,” she said. Linda taught PE at the school for fourteen years and met her husband, Jim, at an after-school happy hour. He was the local high school’s director of guidance.

After eighteen years in education, Jim switched to commercial real estate, and he and Linda moved around the country for several years. They lived in Greenwich, Connecticut; Chicago; New York City; and finally La Jolla in 1993.

“I was at first reluctant to be here, since my family was all back on the East Coast,” she admitted. “But now I can’t imagine ever going back.”

Linda missed teaching while she and Jim moved around. “I wanted to get back to fitness,” she said. So, she earned a degree as a medical technician, and personal training certificates from the American Arthritis Foundation and UC San Diego Extension. During the last twenty years, Linda has worked at a rehab hospital with inpatients and outpatients, at the Shiley Sports Center, and at Gold’s Gym, where she teaches water exercises and basic fitness classes. “These help with balance, strength, and range of motion,” she explained. She also teaches water exercises at the Patrician retirement community near UTC and has many private clients, mostly seniors; one is ninety-six.

“I try to keep things as interesting as possible—make it fun, so they look forward to coming back,” Linda said. “When they’re not having fun, they can fire me. So far, no one has fired me.”

In addition to her fitness work, Linda takes her Havanese dog, Lily, to visit patients in convalescent hospitals and private homes. Now fourteen, Lily is walking more slowly and doesn’t like riding in a car, so Linda wheels her everywhere in a stroller.

Linda’s personal exercise routine includes yoga, Pilates, and weight workouts. She also enjoys tap dancing. She eats sensibly and has always been slim. “I’m not a foodie and enjoy the occasional slice of pizza or burger,” she said. In the evenings, Linda enjoys relaxing with a glass of wine, her husband, Lily, and Jimmy the cat. She recommends good-quality sleep: “I make sure I get between seven and eight hours every night. Enough sleep is important so you have energy to share with others. If I don’t look like I’m up for it, my clients aren’t going to be, either.”

“I’m like my mother.,” said Linda. “I have lots of energy and am outgoing. I’m grateful that I feel that way. I like to get people involved. I’ve been a cheerleader all my life.”

Do you know a Successful Ager?

If you know someone who is an example of successful aging, please contact us at (858) 534-6299 or aging@ucsd.edu with the person’s name, contact information, and a brief description of why you feel he or she is successfully aging. We will feature some of these individuals in future newsletters.

Connect with Us on Facebook

The Center for Healthy Aging has a new Facebook page to better connect with its friends by providing up-to-date news, helpful articles, and informative infographics. What can you expect by connecting with us on Facebook?

• Resources for support for older adults
• Information about age-related disease awareness and research
• Participation in discussions on a variety of topics
• Advance notice about events in your geographic area
• A community sharing common experiences with living a mindful and healthy life, regardless of age

Please join us at our new page—and invite your friends to join as well.

VISIT www.facebook.com/ucsd.healthy.aging
day. They want something to happen, something that will help keep their bodies and minds healthy, active, and alive.”

Solutions to the challenges of getting old will not be easy, but Dr. Jeste hopes to create a go-to place in which to create them. “There are not too many great role models of this type at the moment,” he said. “There has been too little attention paid. It’s a matter of philosophy. I don’t think of aging as a disease to be cured, but a process to be enhanced.”

Dr. Jeste has pulled together a diverse collection of experts to comprise the UC San Diego Center for Healthy Aging. They represent varied disciplines on campus, from the School of Medicine and the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to the Jacobs School of Engineering and Qualcomm Institute, from local government to private foundations to business leaders in health care, housing, and social services. Dr. Jeste believes that cross-pollination of ideas and abilities can create new ways to address aging and provide a road map for policy makers and social drivers.

“For example,” he explained, “housing for seniors is something most academicians don’t talk about. The whole concept of home and house is changing, especially for older people. Seniors are not going to be happy in traditional retirement communities. They want active places where they can socialize, but not be segregated from others. They can do that in their own homes, but those homes will need to look and be different, with technologies perhaps not yet invented that address their particular needs.”

The November think tank meeting is a first step in that direction. Subsequent meetings will focus on issues of community engagement and lifestyle. In the few months since the center was created, much has been achieved. “People want to hear our message,” said Dr. Jeste. “Once you begin the conversation, they realize it’s like what John F. Kennedy once said, ‘If not now, when? If not us, who?’”