UC San Diego Launches New Center on Healthy Aging

Dilip V. Jeste named first associate dean and director

By Scott LaFee

Dilip V. Jeste, MD, Distinguished Professor of psychiatry and neurosciences, has been appointed the first associate dean for Healthy Aging and Senior Care at UC San Diego and will direct the newly established Center on Healthy Aging.

The appointment recognizes the broad and growing interest, research, and need to improve and promote the long-term health and well-being of older Americans, who comprise an ever-larger percentage of the US population. In 2009, roughly one in eight Americans was sixty-five years and older. In 2030, that ratio is projected to be one in five.

As UC San Diego’s Estelle and Edgar Levi Chair in Aging and director of the Sam and Rose Stein Institute for Research on Aging, Jeste has long been a leading scientist and advocate for greater understanding of how Americans age, and how to help them do so well and healthfully.

“When I first became involved in this type of research two decades ago, aging was viewed as all doom and gloom,” said Jeste. “Old age was defined by disease, dementia, disability, and death. But I’ve found that aging has an important positive side, too. There is, of course, some physical decline and cognitive impairment with aging, but several parts of psychosocial functioning actually improve. In terms of well-being and emotional regulation, as people get older, even if they are more physically impaired, they tend to be more

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Vascular Laboratory at the VA San Diego Healthcare System. His research and clinical practice focus on the prevention of cardiovascular disease by examining risk factors for lower extremity peripheral arterial disease and chronic venous disease. Dr. Allison is a fellow of the American Heart Association and a diplomate of the American Board of Preventive Medicine.

Free Parking
In order to receive a free parking permit by mail, e-mail maja@ucsd.edu or call (858) 822-7485 no later than the last Friday before the lecture. Note: If you have a disabled person placard, you do not need a permit and are allowed to park in any handicap or metered space.

Directions 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 Education and Telemedicine Building.
• Walk under the Medical Education and Telemedicine Building bridge and enter the Biomedical Sciences Building through large sliding glass doors.
• Turn left at the first hallway. Garren Auditorium is in Room 1105.

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Matthew Allison, MD, MPH

satisfied with life. It’s the paradox of aging, and it’s something that I think we must address, explore, investigate, and understand. We need to stop thinking about how older people are a burden to society and instead focus on how they are a foundation: the personification of resilience, knowledge, and wisdom.”

David Brenner, MD, vice chancellor for Health Sciences and dean of the School of Medicine, said the new center will help make UC San Diego a local, national, and global leader “in not just clinical care, research, and training, but also in innovation and health policy for seniors. And Dr. Jeste is—with his unsurpassed scientific expertise, vision, and tireless advocacy in these areas—ideally suited to lead this collaborative effort across the campus.”

Jeste’s primary areas of research focus have been the neuropyschiatric and neurobiological characteristics of schizophrenia and Alzheimer’s disease and the development and psycho-bio-social treatment of late-life psychoses. In recent years, he has devoted much of his time to characterizing the nature and neurobiology of a successful and healthy mental state, particularly among older adults.

Jeste said the center will seek to become a major think tank for senior-care policy, research, and training by developing new evidence-based, personalized, and cost-effective health-care models and by helping to train new generations of physicians, pharmacists, and scientists to address the key and specific issues of an aging America.

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“Initially, the focus will be health and health care, but over time I’d like the center to go beyond to other questions about how society prepares itself for rapidly growing numbers of older people—in terms of technologies, finances, housing, transportation, and urban planning, for example. We’ll draw upon experts throughout UC San Diego, nationally, and internationally.”

Jeste received his medical education in India at the University of Poona and the University of Bombay, followed by psychiatry and neurology residencies at Cornell University and George Washington University, respectively. He did a research fellowship and then was on the staff of the National Institute of Mental Health in Washington, D.C. In 1986 he joined the faculty of UC San Diego and has held many positions of leadership. He is the author of 11 books, more than 575 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and 125 invited book chapters. He is editor-in-chief of the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry.

In his almost three decades at UC San Diego, Jeste has served in many positions of leadership. Currently he is director of education for the UC San Diego Clinical and Translational Research Institute and chief of the Geriatric Psychiatry Division at UC San Diego Health System and VA San Diego Healthcare System.

Jeste is past president of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry, and the West Coast College of Biological Psychiatry, and founding president of the International College of Geriatric Psychoneuropharmacology. He is also a member of the Institute of Medicine, part of the National Academy of Sciences, and has served on the first National Institutes of Health Council of Councils.
Cyber-Seniors

At seventy-six years old, Annette wanted to get online so she wouldn’t miss out on party invites. Once she got the hang of the computer, she didn’t hesitate to jump into online dating. Ellard, eighty-nine years old, was originally interested in looking up his old buddies from World War II, but instead turned his interest toward reconnecting with his estranged daughter via Skype. He also found himself a bit of an online romance. Shura, eighty-eight years old, created a hilarious YouTube cooking tutorial. After seeing Shura’s YouTube video, ninety-three-year-old Marion joined in and created her own YouTube channel. With the help of her student mentor, Hannah, Marion came up with a rap video that gave Shura a run for her money!

These are some of the stars of the documentary Cyber-Seniors, which is intended to encourage intergenerational bonding and inspire teenagers to help ease older adults into online activities. Proving you’re never too old to learn something new, the documentary follows a group of initially reluctant older adults as they discover the wonders of the World Wide Web with the help of young mentors.

The idea for Cyber-Seniors came from a high school project that was launched in 2009 by two sisters, Macaulay (age sixteen) and Kascha Cassaday (age eighteen). The sisters had witnessed firsthand how learning to use the Internet had transformed their grandparents’ lives. After learning some basic skills, their grandparents were in touch several times a week by e-mail, Facebook, and Skype. The Internet was instrumental in keeping their family connected despite busy schedules and living in different cities. Inspired by this realization, the sisters started a Cyber-Seniors program to help other seniors get online.

Macaulay and Kascha developed a training manual and recruited their friends to visit a local retirement home twice a week to teach interested seniors how to use the Internet. The seniors all had different interests. Some were eager to get onto Facebook to see photos of their grandchildren, others wanted to play online games, and everyone wanted to use e-mail. Director Saffron Cassaday, Macaulay and Kascha’s elder sister, began filming some of the early Cyber-Seniors sessions and started to see a story emerge.

AARP Foundation will sponsor screenings of Cyber-Seniors around the country. To learn more about the film and the program, visit http://CyberSeniorsDocumentary.com.
Giving to Stein

With your gifts, you have the power to ignite the innovation and imagination that have made UC San Diego Health Sciences—and the Stein Institute—a magnet for renowned scientists and groundbreaking research.

Understanding the process of healthy aging and preventing disability and disease later in life is our goal, and we strive to achieve our mission through research, training, and education. Your support is critical to our ability to have an impact on our aging population here and around the world.

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Please make your check payable to UCSD Foundation; write Stein Institute in the memo portion of the check and include a brief note specifying that you would like your donation to go to the Stein Institute. Mail your gift to the address below:

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