Getting Inspired: NIMH Day 2014

By Maja Gawronska, Program Manager

January was an exciting month for the students enrolled in the Medical Students’ Sustained Training and Research Experience in Aging and Mental Health (MSTREAM) Program. Students were invited to attend a one-day conference at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, on January 28, 2014. NIMH is the largest organization in the world supporting research on mental health through its own internal research efforts and through grants.

The Stein Institute for Research on Aging launched MSTREAM in 2010, and it has been quite successful. Students in this NIMH-funded program participate in research activities focusing on aging, mental health, and neuroscience. First-year participants work on research projects under the mentorship of world-class scientists all over the country for a period of eight to twelve weeks. During their subsequent years of medical school, students publish manuscripts, travel to relevant conferences, take part in a research elective, and visit the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to meet with NIMH officials and present research findings to the leaders of the field.

For this year’s event, nineteen MSTREAM students traveled to Bethesda. The event started with introductions and a presentation by Thomas R. Insel, MD, director of NIMH. Dr. Insel discussed the revolutionary advances in psychiatry and neurosciences as well as the benefits of pursuing a career in research at such an exciting time. He also encouraged budding scientists to ask questions and seek his advice.

After Dr. Insel’s talk, Philip S. Wang, MD, PhD, deputy director; Mark Chavez, PhD, associate director of research training and career development; George T. Niederehe, PhD, geriatrics research branch chief; and Jovier D. Evans, PhD, Geriatric Translational Neuroscience Program chief, discussed the opportunities available for individuals interested in pursuing a scientific career.

Health (NIH) to meet with NIMH officials and present research findings to the leaders of the field.

FREE PUBLIC LECTURE

MARCH
Aging in the Digital Era: How New Technologies Can Impact Care
Ipsit Vahia, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, UC San Diego
Director of Research, Senior Behavioral Health Program
March 19, 2014, 5:30 p.m.
Garren Auditorium, Biomedical Sciences Building, UC San Diego

APRIL
The Science of Dieting: Why Is It Difficult for Most People, but Not Those with Anorexia Nervosa?
Walter Kaye, PhD
Director, Eating Disorders Center for Treatment and Research Program
Professor, UC San Diego Department of Psychiatry
April 16, 2014, 5:30 p.m.
Garren Auditorium, Biomedical Sciences Building, UC San Diego

MARCH’S LECTURE

While younger people tend to be seen as experts in new technologies, many older adults also use the Internet, social media, cell phones, and tablet computers. In fact, 53 percent of American adults ages sixty-five and older utilize the Internet or e-mail. How can new technologies help you live longer and stay healthy? How can they affect health care?

Learn more from Ipsit Vahia, MD, an assistant clinical professor in the continued on page 4

2014 MSTREAM participants

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Catherine Dufour: “Hispanic Ethnicity Modifies the Association of the VACS Index to Cognitive and Functional Outcomes”

Yash Joshi: “Impact of Sleep Deprivation in Mouse Model with Plaques and Tangles”

Kristen Berendzen: “Neuroendocrine Regulation of Mitochondrial Stress in a C. Elegans Model of Neurodegeneration”

Chelsie Hollas: “Is Exercise in Early- and Midadulthood Associated with Cognition in Midlife?”

Lilianna Yuen: “Examining the Role of Astrocytes and A-Synuclein Oligomers in the Pathogenesis of Parkinson’s Disease”

Camille Malatt: “The Progression of Beta-Amyloid Deposition”

Ricky Savjani: “Free vs. Forced Decision Making”

Alan Rodriguez Penney: “Comorbidities in Persons Infected with HIV: Increased Burden with Older Age and Negative Effects on Health Related Quality of Life”

Linh Truong: “Improved Depression and Diabetes Care Management among Elderly Latinos: Design, Implementation, and Preliminary Outcomes”

Amie Nguyen: “Differentiation of Behavioral Variant Frontotemporal Dementia (bvFTD) from Alzheimer’s Disease Varies by Age of Onset”

Olga Aminifard: “ISP: Physician Assessment of CMS Eligibility for Hospice (PACE-H)”

Whitney McFadden: “Uniform Distribution of Interstitial White Matter Neurons In Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex”

Vishnu Parthasarathy: “Assessing the Role of Triglycerides, a Component of Metabolic Syndrome X, in Cognitive Dysfunction”

Olivia Campa: “Help-Seeking in Mexican-Origin Men: Suicide and Depression among Older Adults”

Jennifer Gahan and Elizabeth Ryer: “iPads for Controlling Behavior and Symptoms in Older Psychiatric Patients”

Josh Haratz: “A Randomized, Telephone Based Intervention for Management of Chronic Pain in Older Adults”

Ipsit Vahia, MD

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Department of Psychiatry at UC San Diego and director of research for the Senior Behavioral Health Program. He is also on the faculty of the Stein Institute. Dr. Vahia is a diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and a member of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry. He serves as an editorial board member for the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry. He has been publishing extensively in international journals and textbooks on mental health and is the recipient of an international junior investigator award form the International Psychogeriatric Association and the International College of Geriatric Psychoneuropharmacology.

Free Parking

In order to receive a free parking permit by mail, 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 and park in an A or B spot.
• 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.

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Congratulations to the following nineteen students from UC San Diego and medical schools at Drexel University, Johns Hopkins University, Temple University, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech, UC Davis, UC Irvine, and University of Puerto Rico for participating in NIMH Day 2014.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Tom Insel, MD, Director, NIMH
Philip Wang, MD, PhD, Deputy Director, NIMH
Joyce Chung, PhD, Deputy Clinical Director, NIMH
Mark Chavez, PhD, Associate Director of Research Training and Career Development, NIMH
George T. Niederehe, PhD, Geriatrics Research Branch Chief, NIMH
Jovier D. Evans, PhD, Geriatric Translational Neuroscience Program Chief
Dilip V. Jeste, MD, Principal Investigator of the MSTREAM Grant
MEET THIS MONTH’S SUCCESSFUL AGER

Mary “Kip” Cioffi

By Samuel Lee

Mary “Kip” Cioffi, age ninety-one, sees a world with endless possibilities: an infinite sky where there is no end to adventure. And this is exactly the metaphor to describe her life.

From singing with Frank Sinatra to running a multimillion-dollar business to soaring through the skies, she’s led quite the interesting and successful life—and is still as lively today as she’s ever been.

Kip was born in Hoboken, New Jersey, on March 19, 1922. She lived down the street from Frank Sinatra and attended school with him. They would pool five cents to buy music sheets and sing together. Kip later heard Frank Sinatra’s breathtaking voice at the Paramount Theater, where he became a star.

As a senior in high school, Kip accompanied a girlfriend to a modeling audition at John Robert Powers, now a renowned talent agency, in New York City. At the audition, the agents signed her instead. Kip remembers one photo shoot where she sat atop a model rocket. Although the rocket was only a prop, Kip would nevertheless wind up soaring through the skies.

On her way home from high school, Kip would frequently pass by two boys building an airplane out of a kit. These building kits were quite popular and contained all the parts for a fully functional airplane. That whetted Kip’s appetite to fly, and she went on to take flying lessons. She received her pilot’s license in Sweetwater, Texas, and began flying for the Ryan brothers, who later founded Ryanair.

At the time, men were uneasy with women in the workplace, especially flying airplanes. On one frightful morning, Kip was out flying and one of the male pilots dog-tailed her straight out of the skies. She was forced to make an emergency landing, causing her to go through the windshield face first. As Kip puts it, “Yes I landed. I landed right in the hospital.” The first plane she piloted now resides in the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium.

After high school, Kip moved with her family to Kodiak, Alaska, and attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She was the first radio announcer for Alaska on the news station WDCQ Kodiak Alaska. To earn more money to fly, Kip became a crane shift operator in Seattle, Washington. She worked for hours on end, suspended seventeen stories high, with only two pails beside her: one for her lunch and the other for excrement.

Kip met her husband, Chuck, on the dance floor. Although he was known to be a bon vivant, he fell in love with Kip the instant he met her. It took him three proposals and a departure to Chicago, Illinois, before Kip realized she loved him. They married in Fairbanks and eventually moved to Chicago, where they raised six children.

Kip was the first woman to receive a loan from the Small Business Association, and she used it to start a board and care facility in Alpine, California. What began out as a way to take care of her mother grew into a multimillion-dollar Alzheimer’s care facility that now houses over thirty-eight seniors with complete staff and medication.

Kip still leads an active lifestyle. On her eighty-ninth birthday, she did what she loves most: copiloted and flew over the moonlike surfaces of the Alaskan glaciers. Kip cruises around the world so frequently that her friends jokingly ask which country she’s returned from when they see her. She attends lectures and participates in discussions, eats healthily, and walks daily. She believes that “you need to realize that life is there. You can either share it or shun it. If you share it you’ll have a better life and live happily until it’s time to leave.” Kip plans on living past one hundred, just as her mother did.
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Following this, the MSTREAM participants presented their research projects. NIMH officials asked the students questions and offered important suggestions about new directions in which to take their research.

The day concluded with a tour of the NIH Clinical Center with Joyce Chung, PhD, deputy clinical director at NIMH. Students had an opportunity to get a firsthand account of current programs available in our nation’s largest research hospital and learn more about bench to bedside care, which allows for treatments developed in the labs to be taken quickly to patients.

Overall, it was an extremely successful day of informative talks, fruitful meetings, and inspiring presentations. We would like to thank students, mentors, and everyone at NIMH who helped us coordinate the visit.