



UC San Diego

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology & Palliative Care Newsletter



Not subscribed yet? [SIGN UP HERE!](#)

In this edition:

- Happy New Year!
- Spotlight on the Importance of Longevity Research with Dr. Aladdin Shadyab
- What's Happening/Events
- Congratulations
- In the News



Please consider donating to our mission! While we continue to make great strides, we are limited on what we can accomplish with existing funds. We encourage you to become involved with the UC San Diego Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care and join us in helping older adults live their best lives longer and improving care for individuals with serious illness. By supporting our efforts, you can ensure that our research, education programs, and clinical care keep pace with the needs of our community and remain strong.

SUPPORT US



Spotlight on the Importance of Longevity Research: Aladdin Shadyab, Ph.D.



Aladdin Shadyab, Ph.D.

What is the goal of your research?

My research is broadly focused on identifying determinants of exceptional longevity, i.e., living to ages 90 and older without disease and disability. In a recent study I published, we found that maintaining a stable weight throughout life predicts exceptional longevity. In another study, we found that remaining physically active is key to achieving longevity, regardless of whether or not you have genes that predispose you to a long life.

A study I published last year found that higher optimism increases your chances of exceptional longevity; this study was recently cited in The New York Times article, 'The 7 Keys to Living Longer and Healthier.' ([article linked below](#))

What is your current profession/role?

I am a tenured Associate Professor of Medicine and Public Health, with a joint appointment in the Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology, and Palliative Care, and Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity Science. In addition to conducting research on aging, I teach courses on how to perform aging research to master's students, doctoral students, medical residents, and physicians.

What initially inspired and motivated you to pursue a career in Gerontology?

My grandfather, who passed away in 2013, lived to the age of 102. While his longevity was partly due to genetics (his aunt lived to 107 years!), he was physically active his entire adult life and consumed a healthy Mediterranean diet, which I believe contributed to his longevity and ability to perform activities of daily living (e.g., walking, dressing, showering) independently. Seeing my grandfather as a successful model of healthy aging inspired me to pursue aging and longevity research.

What areas of research are you currently working on?

My current research program is focused on the study of biological aging to better understand why people age differently. Studies have shown that people whose cells are older than their actual age (i.e., they are biologically older) tend to have higher risk of chronic disease and disability. I am currently focused on understanding whether older biological age is associated with Alzheimer's disease, brain health, and, importantly, living to age 90 without dementia ('cognitively healthy longevity').

Why is this study important?

Emerging studies are showing that being biologically older is associated with higher risk of major chronic diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, dementia) and disability. The ultimate goal is to identify drugs that can slow biological aging, thereby preventing multiple diseases simultaneously and extending healthy longevity among our aging population.

What are your hopes for the future directions of your research?

The long-term goal is to identify biological aging as a target for future therapeutic and lifestyle interventions to slow or prevent Alzheimer's disease and other major chronic diseases of aging. I am currently an investigator on several clinical trials to identify novel treatments for Alzheimer's disease. For example, we are conducting a trial to determine whether benfotiamine, which is taken as a supplement to increase thiamine in the body, improves memory and thinking among people with early Alzheimer's disease. I am also involved in an initiative to repurpose existing medications to prevent Alzheimer's disease. Lifestyle interventions are also important to slow aging. I was an investigator on the EXERT trial, which showed that regular exercise of any type stalled further memory decline in adults with memory problems.

How is your work being funded?

My work is primarily funded by the National Institute on Aging, which is a federal institute that funds aging research.

What would you do with additional funding?

It is a very exciting time to be doing longevity research, but there is so much left to learn. I would use additional funding to conduct novel studies using blood samples from older adults to identify new biomarkers for exceptional longevity. A biomarker is a characteristic of the body that we can measure (e.g., proteins in the blood). Additional funding would be critical to allow me to identify novel blood-based biomarkers that we can target (e.g., using medications) to lengthen healthy longevity.

The New York Times



Cristina Spanò

Read The New York Times article "The 7 Keys to Longevity" in which Dr. Aladdin Shadyab's study is cited and our Division Chief, Dr. Alison Moore is quoted.

[Read the article](#)

What's Happening/Events

The Gerontology Research Collaborative (GRC) and the Stein Institute for Research on Aging's "In This Day & Age" Seminar Series

The **Gerontology Research Collaborative (GRC)** and the **Stein Institute for Research on Aging** present:

IN THIS DAY & AGE

SEMINAR SERIES ON
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
AGING RESEARCH

Thursday January 25th 4:00 - 5:00 pm PT

UCSD Stein Clinical Research Building
Conference Room 148, and Zoom

Meeting ID: 836 3730 4984



"Gero Neuro Protectors, Molecules to
Protect the Aging Brain"

Dr. Michael Petrascheck, PhD

Department of Molecular & Cell Biology
The Scripps Research Institute

Sponsored by the GRC and the Stein Institute for Research on Aging at UCSD. For questions, contact Howard Phang (hphang@health.ucsd.edu)

The **Gerontology Research Collaborative (GRC)** and the **Stein Institute for Research on Aging's "In This Day & Age" Seminar Series** aims to highlight cutting-edge and multidisciplinary aging research happening in this day and age within the San Diego community and beyond. Please join us on Thursday, January 25th at 4:00pm PT for an exciting seminar talk by Dr. Michael Petrascheck from the Scripps Research Institute!

TODAY 4:00-5:00pm PT at UCSD Stein Clinical Research Building Conference Room 148 and Zoom:

<https://uhealth.zoom.us/j/83637304984> (meeting ID: 836 3730 4984)

More about the Gerontology Research Collaborative

Our Wonderful Geriatrics Fellows Attend a Pottery Class



Mayra Bugarin, Kathryn Dere, Jennifer Kim & Anjoulie Pujji



Jennifer Kim



Kathryn Dere



Mayra Bugarin

Wellness Director, Dr. Anjoulie Pujji took our 3 Geriatrics fellows, Drs. Mayra Bugarin, Kathryn Dere, and Jennifer Kim to a pottery class. Their creations are quite impressive!

[More about our fellows](#)

Congratulations
are in order...



Tolúwalàşẹ "Làşẹ" Àjàyí, MD FAAP is now a Fellow of the [Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine \(FAAHPM\)](#)!

Congratulations Dr. Àjàyí!!



Kyle P. Edmonds, M.D., FAAHPM received the 2024 [American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine \(AAHPM\)](#) Gerald H. Holman Distinguished Service Award. He received this award as part of the Hospice Policy Ad Hoc Work Group, and received the same award in 2022. [See the AAHPM award winners.](#)

Congratulations Dr. Edmonds!!

In the news...

- Dr. Benjamin Han quoted in article in Washington Post "Seniors are embracing marijuana, which offers relief – and risk" [Read it here.](#)
- Dr. Khai Nguyen is a co-author on "Cohort for Alzheimer's Disease (ACAD) pilot study on genetic and non-genetic risk factors for Alzheimer's disease among Asian Americans and

Canadians." To learn more about the Asian Cohort for Alzheimer's Disease (ACAD) study and the work that Dr. Nguyen and others here at UC San Diego are doing, [read here](#).

- Dr. Benjamin Han's article in The New York Times "Why Some Seniors are Choosing Pot Over Pills" [Read it here](#).

Not signed up yet? [SIGN UP HERE](#)



[Contact Us](#)

UC San Diego Health

[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt Out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

9500 Gilman Drive MC 0665 | La Jolla, CA 92093-0665 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.