

# UC San Diego

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## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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The Division of Geriatrics, Gerontology & Palliative Care Newsletter



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### In this edition:

- Spotlight: Lek Wei (Anson) Seow
- What's Happening
- Congratulations
- Helpful Resources
- In the News...



## Spotlight: Lek Wei (Anson) Seow



### ***What is your current profession/role?***

I am a third year PhD student in Dr. Anthony Molina's lab, where I primarily work on the [Dynamic Resilience Initiative \(DRIVE\)](#).

### ***What initially inspired and motivated you to pursue a career in your field?***

My initial interest was in cancer and immunology, which was driven by personal experiences involving family members. I wanted to better understand diseases and contribute to finding potential cures. To explore this interest, I volunteered in an immunology lab during my undergraduate studies, where I gained hands-on research experience. After graduation, I worked as a research associate for two years to further develop my skills in cancer research. During this time, I discovered my passion for scientific inquiry – I not only refined technical skills but also developed critical thinking to generate new hypotheses. This ultimately led me to pursue a PhD in Biomedical Sciences to continue tackling complex and unsolved problems.

### ***What parts of your work have been particularly inspiring or rewarding for you?***

During my first year of the PhD program, I rotated through several labs to broaden my research experience. I became particularly fascinated by mitochondria – the powerhouse of the cell – and their essential role in cellular function. I

found it especially rewarding to successfully perform mitochondrial respirometry assays and generate strong, meaningful data. Knowing that my work could contribute to new discoveries and deepen our understanding of cellular processes is incredibly motivating.

*What is your go-to stress relief activity during a busy workweek?*

I enjoy spending time in nature, especially watching sunset. I often go hiking, walk along beach trails, and take scenic photos. Exploring new coffee shops is another favorite way for me to relax and recharge during my free time.

*If you had to choose a different profession, what would it be?*

If I had chosen a different path, I would have pursued a career as a pilot – a dream I have had since childhood.

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## What's Happening

### New Research Gaining Attention: Blood Test May Detect Dementia Risk Decades Early



New research led by Aladdin Shadyab, PhD, suggests that a simple blood test could identify dementia risk in women up to 25 years before symptoms appear. The study is receiving widespread attention from national and international media. It has been featured in [The Times](#) (UK), The [Telegraph](#), The [Independent](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Fox News](#), [KOGO News Radio](#) (San Diego), [KUSI TV](#) (San Diego), [NBC Channel 7](#) (San Diego) [Everyday Health](#), [Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology News](#), as well as [UC San Diego Today](#). and KTLA (link to watch below).

Watch the KTLA feature

Read the full study

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## UC San Diego Well Represented at Annual Assembly of

# Hospice and Palliative Care



The Palliative Care Clinic of Tomorrow:  
Designing for Growth and Complexity

Christina F. Foster - [cfoster@uams.edu](mailto:cfoster@uams.edu)  
Dee R. Goodley - [deegoodley@uams.edu](mailto:deegoodley@uams.edu)  
Katie E. Feltz - [katie.feltz@uams.edu](mailto:katie.feltz@uams.edu)  
Kara J. Shuman - [kshuman@uams.edu](mailto:kshuman@uams.edu)  
Dorothy H. Lee - [dlee@uams.edu](mailto:dlee@uams.edu)  
Karin Stuber - [kstuber@uams.edu](mailto:kstuber@uams.edu)  
Shelley A. Johnson - [sjohnson@uams.edu](mailto:sjohnson@uams.edu)

Outstanding  
in Research

Shelley A. Johnson

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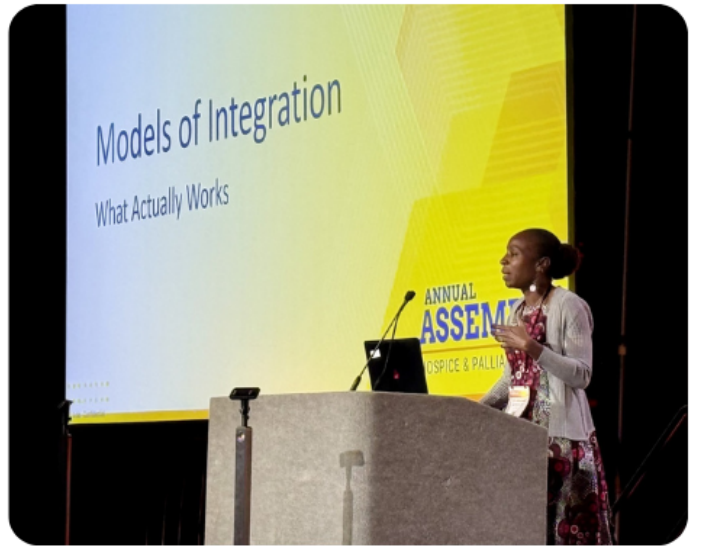
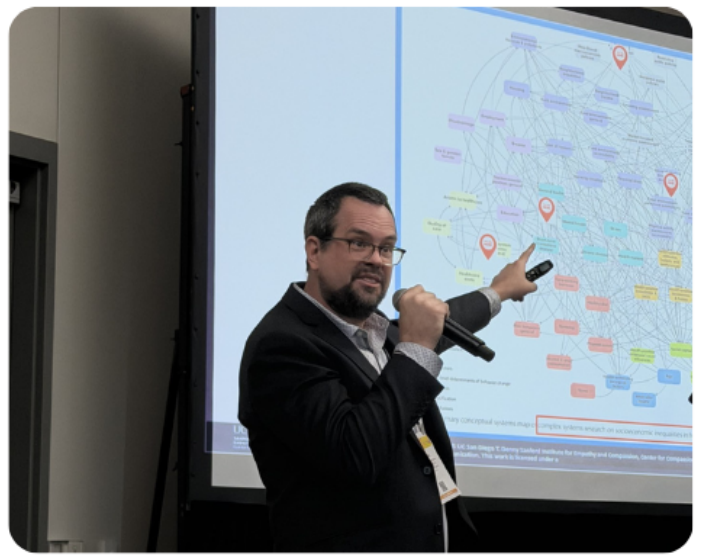
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The breadth of topics our team covered at the Assembly, ranged from pharmacology, spiritual screening, and trauma-informed care, to policy, outpatient program design and complex device management in hospice, reflecting the clinical and academic range we bring to UC San Diego every day. The presence of fellows at a national conference as presenting authors also reflects the caliber of our training program and the mentorship environment that our faculty sustains.

[More about the AAHPM Annual Assembly](#)

## Our Annual Geriatrics Fellowship Retreat

Faculty, staff and fellows came together for the 3rd Annual UC San Diego Geriatric Medicine Fellowship Retreat, covering the critical topic of providing feedback followed by a thoughtful reflection and discussion of didactic content enhancement ideas.



[More about our Geriatrics Fellowship Program](#)

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## Local Partners Connect for GWEP Quarterly Partnership Council Meeting

The San Diego / Imperial Geriatrics Education Center GWEP held its quarterly Partnership Council meeting on March 9! Thank you to the Alzheimer's Association - San Diego/Imperial Chapter for hosting the meeting!

Spearheaded by UC San Diego, our GWEP is one of 42 HRSA-funded Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Programs (GWEPs) across the country. Together, thanks to robust partnerships with academic, healthcare, community and County program providers, we are working to address care gaps and improve health outcomes for older adults, strengthen training of the geriatrics workforce, and build age-friendly and dementia-friendly health systems and communities.

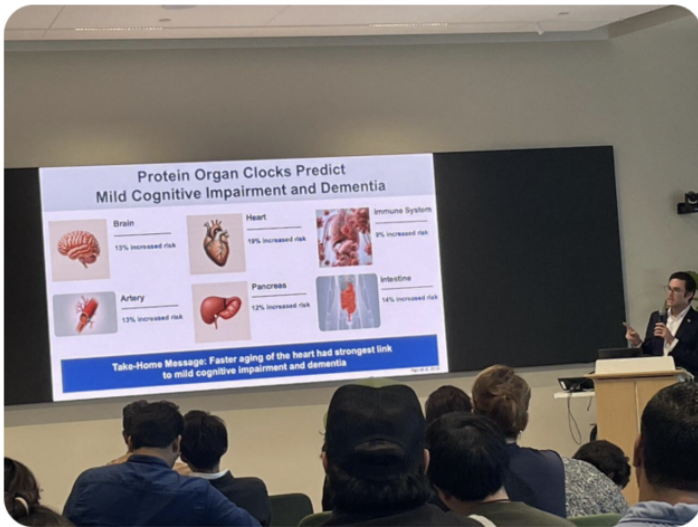


[More about the GWEP](#)

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## The First Longevity Innovation Forum

Earlier this month, Division Chief Dr. Alison Moore and division members, Drs. Aladdin Shadyab and Anthony Molina participated at the first ever Longevity Innovation Forum in San Diego. The forum brought together global leaders, researchers, and innovators to explore the science and future of longevity. Dr. Moore joined the “Ask a Longevity Doctor” panel, Dr. Molina presented on clinical and molecular markers of healthy longevity interventions, and Dr. Shadyab discussed strategies to reduce Alzheimer’s risk. Their participation highlights the Division’s commitment to advancing research that maximizes the health and independence of older adults and translates discoveries into real-world impact.



More about the Longevity Innovation Forum

Congratulations  
are in order...

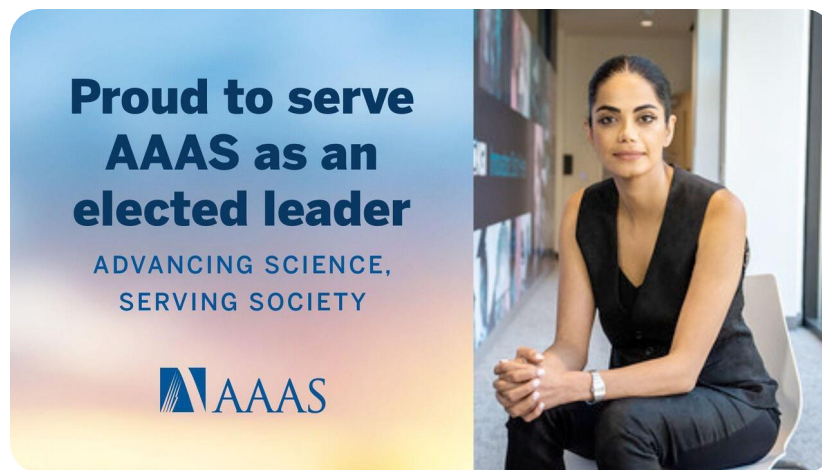


**Kevin Yang, Psychiatry Resident and Former MSTAR Student, was selected for the UCLA National Clinical Scholars Program Cohort 2026-2028!**

[More about UCLA's NCSP](#)

**Kiana Aran, PhD, has been named to the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science!**

[More about AAAS](#)



## Helpful Resources

**Celebrate Older Californians Nutrition Month**

**OLDER CALIFORNIANS**  
*Nutrition* MONTH

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March is Older Californians Nutrition Month, a time to highlight programs and partnerships that help older adults stay healthy, independent, and connected through nutritious meals. Across California, nutrition services provide balanced meals, culturally meaningful foods, and expert guidance to support healthy aging.

CDA Older Californians Nutrition Month

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## Sleep Awareness Month

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Learn more about the importance of sleep and the impact of sleep problems on health and quality of life, along with tips for a better night's sleep through these resources:

Sleep & Older Adults (NIH)

6 Sleep Remedies (NCO)

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## In the News...

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Dr. Khai Nguyen, Clinical Services Chief, was featured in the UC San Diego Office of Experience Transformation Newsletter as part of National Sleep Awareness Month, highlighting why the importance of rest and protecting sleep disruption during hospitalization matters –especially for older adults' healing, their cognitive function, and as an element of age-friendly care. Read it [here](#).

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Recent publications from PubMed:

### [Plasma Phosphorylated Tau 217 and Incident Mild Cognitive Impairment and Dementia in Older Women](#)

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE: In this cohort study of cognitively unimpaired older women, p-tau217 was associated with incident MCI or dementia up to 25 years later. These findings suggest that age, race, APOE ε4, and HT use should be considered when examining associations of p-tau217 with cognitive outcomes.

Tue, Mar 10, 2026

[Read more](#)

## [Cannabis Use Among Caregivers of Older Adults: A Systematic Literature Review](#)

As the global population ages, the number of caregivers has risen accordingly. Though caregiving has many rewards, it may also cause psychological stress. To manage this burden, caregivers may adopt various coping strategies, including cannabis use. This systematic review aimed to synthesize existing literature on cannabis use among caregivers for older adults. A database search in PubMed, PsycINFO, and CINAHL identified 357 unique peer-reviewed articles to screen and five were included in the...

Mon, Mar 02, 2026

[Read more](#)

## [Effects of body composition on age- and sex-related differences in resting metabolic rate from a healthy aging cohort](#)

Resting metabolic rate (RMR) accounts for the majority of the total energy expenditure. While RMR is known to decline with advancing age and is recognized to be lower in females compared to males, the mechanisms underlying these differences remain unclear. Changes in body composition are posited to account for age- and sex-related differences in RMR, but to what extent lacks consensus. We characterized 80 healthy adults aged 23-82 years from the San Diego Nathan Shock Center (SD-NSC) clinical...

Fri, Feb 27, 2026

[Read more](#)

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## We want your feedback!

Did you know that the division has a virtual suggestion box where you can provide anonymous feedback? [You can access that here.](#)

You can also access the virtual suggestion box on the division's [website](#) – scroll to the bottom of the homepage and click on the feedback link.

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

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. Join us to help older adults live their best lives longer and improve 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.

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