Social/Behavioral Research in the School of Aging Studies

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Goals

• Why social and behavioral science is essential to understanding aging
• Describe the USF School of Aging Studies and our growth as a center of excellence in applied aging research
• Collaborations
• Examples of our research
Themes—social/behavioral issues and aging

- Chronic illness—coping by patient and family, interventions to improve quality of life
- Cognitive aging—interaction of aging, genetics, and lifestyle; early detection of cognitive impairment; cognitive training
- Public policy—evaluating cost and effectiveness of alternatives to nursing homes; policy change
- Cross cutting--cultural diversity and health disparities; applied and intervention research
School of Aging Studies

- Formed by 2003 merger of Dept. of Gerontology, Institute on Aging, Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging
- One of two such departments offering undergraduate through PhD degrees in gerontology/aging studies (USC)
- Three areas of concentration:
  - Aging and Health
  - Cognitive Aging and Alzheimer’s Disease
  - Public Policy and Long-Term Care
- Faculty (14) from multiple disciplines:
  - Psychology, Sociology, Gerontology, Aging Studies, Biobehavioral Health, Political Science, Public Administration, Social Work
National Institute on Aging (NIA)

• Four areas of funding:
  – Biology of Aging
  – Behavioral and Social Research
  – Neuroscience and Neuropsychology
  – Geriatrics and Clinical Gerontology

  – Behavioral and social research are an important part of each area except Biology of Aging
  – Other NIH Institutes also fund social/behavioral research in aging
Research funding in Aging Studies

• We have gone from ZERO in 1995-96 to $1,910,104 in 2005-06
• Funded by NIH, Foundations, and State of Florida
• We contribute to substantial additional funding for research credited to other USF departments and Moffitt
• We simultaneously tripled our SCH production over the past 5 years
Collaborations—Research and faculty appointments

- Grants and publications with faculty from Public Health, Nursing, Medicine, FMHI, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Psychology, Social Work, and Moffitt.

- Our faculty, Courtesy appointments with Nursing, Medicine, Public Health, Psychology, Women’s Studies, Africana Studies, and Moffitt.

- We have Courtesy faculty from FMHI, Biology, Gov’t and Int’l Affairs, Psychology, Social Work, Medicine, Physical Therapy, Nursing, Public Health
Collaborations--education

- PhD in Aging Studies is campus wide, faculty mentors from many departments
- Graduate Certificate programs jointly sponsored with Nursing and Social Work—proposed programs with Medicine (Aging and Neuroscience); Public Health and Nursing (Risk Management)
Examples of funded projects, Aging and Health

• **Coping with Arthritis: Effects of Age, Race, and SES.** NIA. Jessica McIlvane, PhD, PI

• **Ethnic Differences in the Management in Osteoarthritis.** NIAMSD. Minority Supplement with University of Pittsburgh. Tamara Baker, PhD, PI

• **Quality of Life in Older Breast Cancer Survivors.** NIA. William Haley, PhD, PI

• **Psychosocial Impact of Stroke on Family Caregivers.** NINDS, with University of Alabama at Birmingham. William Haley, PhD, Co-PI
Examples of funded projects, Cognitive Aging

- *Lifestyle Activities and Changes in Cognitive Abilities*. NIA. Brent Small, PhD, PI
- *Apolipoprotein E Genotype and Cognitive Performance*. NCI. Brent Small, PhD, PI
- *Prior Knowledge Effects in Cognitive Aging*. NIA. Cathy McEvoy, PhD, PI
- Recent NIA funding by new faculty member, Jerri Edwards, PhD
  - *The Impact of Medication Use Upon the Mobility of Older Adults (PI)*
Examples of funded projects, Public Policy and Long Term Care

- *Florida’s Minority Elders, An Assessment of Physical and Mental Health Service Needs*. AoA. Kathryn Hyer, PhD, Jennifer Salmon, PhD, PIs
- *Assessing Florida’s Innovations to Improve Nurse Staffing and Quality of Care in Nursing Homes*. Commonwealth Fund. Kathryn Hyer, PhD, PI
- *Florida Medicaid Program Analysis*. Florida Agency for Health Care Administration. Glenn Mitchell, PhD, PI
- *National Hospice Caregiver Needs Assessment*. AoA, Hospice of Florida Suncoast. Jennifer Salmon, PhD, PI
Some major funded projects, Aging Studies collaboration

- *Florida Alzheimer's Disease Research Center.* NIA, College of Medicine. H. Potter, PI (Haley, Small)
- *Efficacy of Systematic Assessment in Improving Hospice Outcomes.* NINR, College of Nursing. S. McMillan, PI (Haley, Small)
- *AHCA Studies.* Florida AHCA, FMHI. D. Shern, PI (Mitchell)
- *Post-Doctoral Public Sector Interdisciplinary Training.* Bureau of Health Professions, FMHI. V. Molinari, PI (Haley, Hyer)
- *Recent $400,000 endowed gift from the Arthritis Foundation, Florida Chapter*—Example of the benefit of campus wide collaboration
Recent findings--Health

• Obesity after the age of 70 does not lead to shorter life expectancy, but does lead to more disability (Reynolds)

• People with strong spiritual beliefs have a lower fear of death, regardless of age (Dobbs)

• Walking and strength training can improve flexibility, strength, and coordination in retirement community residents averaging 84 years of age (Andel-cited in NY Times)
Recent findings--Policy

• Following recommended hurricane evacuation procedures could save lives among older adults in nursing homes (Hyer)

• Florida Medicaid Home and Community Based Services programs vary in their cost effectiveness and cost adjustments were made in response to our research (Mitchell, Salmon, Polivka)
Cognitive aging

- Twins with complex work and recreational activities are less likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease (Andel)

- Individuals who subsequently develop Alzheimer’s disease have subtle deficits in memory that can be detected 7 years before AD onset (Small)

- Cognitive and visual testing can detect older adults at risk for auto accidents, and cognitive training can decrease the risk of accidents (Edwards)
Family caregiver intervention

- Coping skills training improves quality of life and reduces burden for family caregivers of hospice patients with cancer (McMillan (Nursing), Small, Haley)
- Family caregivers in hospice often experience “transformations” and improved quality of life (Salmon)
- Counseling and support for Alzheimer’s caregivers can delay nursing home placement of AD patients by 1.5 years, with considerable cost savings (Haley)
Health disparities

- African-Americans with osteoarthritis generally report greater pain and disability than Whites (Baker—Featured in NY Times)
- African-Americans are less likely than Whites to use hospice care and prefer more aggressive end-of-life care (Haley)
Some keys to our success

• Strategic emphasis on applied aging research and areas where extramural funding is available
• Support from Dean, Provost, and President—new faculty lines, merger
• Willingness to collaborate
• Making great hires and having very high standards for faculty evaluation
Final comments

• Improving life for an aging America will require basic science, social-behavioral science, clinical research, and policy analysis
• Social-behavioral researchers can partner with basic and clinical researchers
• Approaching aging as a “cell to society” issue is appealing to the public, foundations, and donors
• Aging Studies is glad to be a part of “one campus” united in the pursuit of excellence
Appendix—Selected publications, Aging and Health


• **McIlvane, J.M.** (in press). African American and White women with arthritis: Disentangling the effects of race and SES on health, coping, and well-being. *Aging & Mental Health*.


Selected publications, Cognitive Aging

Selected publications, Public Policy and Long-Term Care


Selected publications—collaborations with other USF departments


