

LIFELINES | Summer 2019

Director's Corner

Carolyn Aldwin

Jo Anne Leonard Endowed Director



Lots to report on this year! We are very pleased to welcome Prof. David Batty to CHAR! Prof. Batty came to the College of Public Health & Human Sciences this year, and maintains a professorship at University College, London. He is an eminent chronic disease and injury epidemiologist, specializing in how social, psychological, biological, behavioral and genetic factors from across the life course, and between generations, influence the risk of chronic diseases of major public health importance in adulthood, including cardiovascular disease, selected cancers, and mental illness. He is a very welcome addition to our College and Center



We would also like to welcome Dr. Jenny Sasser, who is an Human Development & Family Sciences Portland faculty with an extensive history in gerontology education. She specializes in critical educational gerontological theory and practice, and is the author of several gerontology textbooks, including one of my favorites, *Aging: Concepts and controversies*.



I also wanted to provide an update on the Veterans Aging: Longitudinal studies in OR (VALOR pilot project). As you may remember, VALOR is a multi-generational study of veterans from the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, and post-911 cohorts, whose purpose is to examine the effect of military service and combat exposure on the aging process. Much of what we currently know about aging has been from research conducted in the WWII cohort, and more information is urgently needed on more recent cohorts to see how their service experiences affects their aging. We have been busy analyzing the data that were collected last summer, and have been presenting findings at various conferences. For example, [Veronica Irvin](#) and [Kelly Chandler](#) reported at the Society for Behavioral Medicine meetings that veterans' spouses reported career difficulties due to frequent moves, but this was related to depressive symptoms only among wives, not among husbands. [Maria Kurth](#) won the best poster presentation at the College's Graduate Student Celebration for a collaborative work with [David Rothwell](#) showing that Vietnam veterans had more PTSD symptoms than the Persian Gulf or post-911 cohorts, controlling for demographics and combat exposure. [Dylan Lee](#), a LIFE Scholar, will be reporting at the American Psychological Association this summer that positive homecoming experiences decreased warzone-related PTSD symptoms in Vietnam Veterans, especially among female veterans, who generally had more positive homecoming experiences. [Soyoung Choun](#) and several colleagues will be presenting at the [Society for the Study of Human Development Conference](#) in Portland this fall that PTSD symptoms among veterans affect depressive symptoms in their spouses, primarily for younger but not older couples and for wives but not husbands of veterans.

Thanks so much to the LIFE Registry members who participated in this study!!

The Center for Healthy Aging Research (CHAR) was established at Oregon State University in 2005 to advance aging research and to promote healthy aging for adults throughout the nation. Learn more at health.oregonstate.edu/healthy-aging



LIFE Scholars

The LIFE Scholars have also been busy this year! The Bill and Judy Winkler fund generously supported last year's LIFE Scholars. **Dylan Lee, Melissa Wong, and Mary Prater** presented their research at the Undergraduate Celebration of Excellence in May. Mrs. Winkler held a small reception later that day for these LIFE Scholars, their mentors, and some prominent contributors to the fund. The students did a stupendous job presenting their research, and we were all extremely proud of them!

The Winkler fund also generously supported four new LIFE Scholars this summer. Congratulations to these new scholars and their mentors!



Name	Project Title	Advisor
Leda Liko	Early changes in NMDA receptor expression and localization in an AD mouse model	Kathy Magnusson
Kendra Braun	Effects of zinc status and age on liver inflammation	Emily Ho
Grace Ross	The role of Nrf2 in brain cellular senescence	Viviana Perez
Amani Hawash	The role of heat shock proteins in protecting aging flies from the effect of blue light	Jaga Giebultowicz

For more information about this program, see <https://health.oregonstate.edu/life-scholars>

CHAR Faculty & Student Affiliates in the News

- A collaborative project involving Jo Anne Leonard Petersen Endowed Chair in Gerontology and Family Studies [Karen Hooker](#) (PI), Assistant Professor [John Geldhof](#), [Shelbie Turner](#) (HDFS doctoral student) and Shannon Jarrott (colleague at Ohio State University), entitled “Beyond quantity and quality: Development of a valid and reliable survey measure of intergenerational contact,” will be funded by the Retirement Research Foundation.
- [Viviana Perez](#) is running for Chair of the Biological Sciences Section of the Gerontological Society of America. Good luck, Viviana!
- A recent CHAR study on mental health in older combat veterans is currently making the [news rounds](#). [Hyunyup Lee](#), [Carolyn Aldwin](#), [Soyoung Choun](#) and colleague Avron Spiro of Boston University and the Boston VA health care system found that combat veterans were more likely than non-combat veterans to have increases in anxiety and depressive symptoms in later life.

Finally, congratulations to Rob Stawski, CHAR PSI Core Director, and his wife Tammy on the birth of their first child!



Carolyn Aldwin

The Center for Healthy Aging Research (CHAR) was established at Oregon State University in 2005 to advance aging research and to promote healthy aging for adults throughout the nation. Learn more at health.oregonstate.edu/healthy-aging

