

# ADVANCES *in Aging*

## Dedicated to the Long Term Care of Gerontological Nursing

Ann Marie Spellbring, Ph.D., associate professor in the University of Maryland School of Nursing, started her career in gerontology in the early 1970's while earning her doctoral degree at the University of Maryland, College Park. "It occurred to me that gerontology was the wave of the future," Spellbring says. She's been riding that wave ever since.

Spellbring coordinates the School of Nursing's undergraduate program in gerontology and the gerontological nurse practitioner program at the graduate level. The undergraduate curriculum, noted for its excellence in 1999, received the John A. Hartford Foundation Institute for Geriatric Nursing award. Spellbring generated the proposal to the Institute, and accepted the award on behalf of the school at the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Currently, Spellbring is the project coordinator of a three-year, \$700,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a nurse-managed, geriatric primary health care model for seniors. "The project involves comprehensive geriatric assessment services, primary care and wellness programs designed to help older adults maintain health and independence; the concept is very new," according to Spellbring. The outcome data obtained during the project will provide an assessment of the effectiveness of this approach to geriatric care.

In a collaborative effort with Donald Stull, Ph.D., associate professor in the School of Nursing, a study is being conducted to evaluate medication administration practices in assisted-living facilities throughout the state. The study was conceived and is being funded by the

Maryland Board of Nursing. In addition, Spellbring, Denise Orwig, Ph.D., and Nicole Brandt, Pharm.D., from the schools of Medicine and Pharmacy, respectively, are completing an initiative on strategies for safe medication management among the elderly. "We think the results of the study will provide implications for future policy," Spellbring says. "It

has raised a lot of issues around services needed relating to the capabilities of the residents."

Quality of care in long-term care facilities is also an important issue to Spellbring. She recently chaired a work group on quality of care in nursing homes, which was part of a legislated Task Force on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes that identified priority issues in long-term care in Maryland. As a result of the recommendations to the Task Force six bills were passed during the state's 2000 legislative session, which brought about changes including:

- increasing the number of hours of direct care and nursing staff in long-term care facilities;
- increasing the state's ombudsman program;
- standardizing quality assurance programs;
- increasing the number of annual unannounced surveys from one to two.

In addition to these projects, Spellbring continues to do work on the incidents of falls among older adults. She has created a falls prevention program for acute and long-term care facilities, and often serves as a consultant to hospitals, nursing homes, and other facilities to help them identify problems related to falls and develop prevention strategies.

She regularly participates and teaches in the "Geriatric Imperative" minimester elective course sponsored each January by the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Program (GGEAR), and has been involved in GGEAR's interdisciplinary education planning committees since its inception in the late 1980's. In addition, she is a board member of the Maryland Gerontological Association and was recently nominated to the research committee of the National Gerontological Nursing Association. She serves on numerous advisory boards examining clinical interventions and the frail older adult.

During 30 years of involvement in gerontology, Spellbring has been an integral player in the development of this specialty. "Each change over the years has mainly been for the better," she says. "The increased coming together of all types of professionals has been important, as well. On this campus, especially, we have an interdisciplinary focus."

Challenges in the future include the current nursing shortage and the increasing clinical demands in the long-term care area. Otherwise, she says, "I can't really think of any major barriers because in the 1990s the field has just exploded. To finally see it come into its own, when almost everything you do is because it's in high demand, has been really rewarding."



Ann Marie Spellbring

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# Center for Research on Aging 2001 Update— FROM THE DIRECTORS

Since its inception two years ago, the UMB Center for Research on Aging has established an infrastructure that supports and fosters effective interactions and collaborations among faculty in aging research. As Center directors, we work with a Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) that represents investigators in gerontology at the six UMB Health Professional Schools and University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). Collectively, we plan programs and strategies that complement existing research and assist in the development of new projects. The Center has supported investigators in submitting over 30 new grant applications, totaling more than \$37 million. Spurred by Center efforts, investigators representing multiple disciplines have formed gerontology research teams amenable to interdisciplinary research. The Center has effectively interacted with educational and clinical programs. We will continue to enhance the involvement and collaboration among interprofessional faculty at UMB and expand aging research and training at the UMB Professional Schools, UMBC, and University of Maryland College Park (UMCP).

Year 2000 proved to be a productive and exciting year, as we were successful in several important initiatives. In August we worked with investigators from the schools of Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy to submit a proposal to the National Institute of Aging for renewal of the University of Maryland Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC), and are awaiting a funding decision. In conjunction

**Andrew P. Goldberg, M.D.**  
Co-Director, Center for Research on Aging  
Director, Veterans Affairs Geriatric  
Research, Education and Clinical Center,  
Baltimore Division



with investigators from UMBC, Gerontology Geriatrics Education and Research program and members of the LAC, the Center helped develop a doctoral program in gerontology that was approved by the Board of Regents in July. Drs. Magaziner (UMB) and Eckert (UMBC) will co-direct this new program. Center leaders also partnered with faculty from the GRECC, the Center for Women's Health Research and the Claude D. Pepper OAIC to develop university-wide programs in geriatrics. These include annual events such as the Advances In Aging Symposium and Gerontology Poster Day, monthly speakers and lectures, the *Advances in Aging* and *Senior Perspective* newsletters, and a Center web page.

Members share our enthusiasm regarding the Center's future goals to cultivate the development of junior faculty and interprofessional collaboration among faculty at the University of Maryland. We will continue efforts with the LAC and university investigators to develop populations, research studies and databases to stimulate new interdisciplinary ventures. We plan to increase the infrastructure support for research activities, develop research cores to assist investigators, expand lectures, symposia, and our newsletter and web page. Special appreciation is extended to the LAC and collaborating faculty, trainees and staff of the University of Maryland for their support and assistance over the past two years. We look forward to working with them in the development and implementation of new exciting research programs during the coming year.



**Jay Magaziner, Ph.D., M.S.Hyg.**  
Co-Director, Center for Research on Aging  
Director, Division of Gerontology  
Department of Epidemiology and  
Preventive Medicine

## 2nd Annual Gerontology Poster Day

The Center for Research on Aging is pleased to sponsor the 2nd Annual Gerontology Poster Day on March 1 in the Medical Student Teaching Facility from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Last year's event attracted nearly 100 faculty and students and proved to be an excellent opportunity to learn about the range of interprofessional aging research at the University of Maryland Baltimore. Members of the Center's Leadership Advisory Committee will judge junior faculty's and trainees' posters. Senior faculty are invited to display poster presentations in the non-competitive category. Awards will be given to junior faculty and in the areas of social science/behavioral research and biomedical research, respectively. For more information, contact [smiller@epi.umaryland.edu](mailto:smiller@epi.umaryland.edu), or call 410.706.4567.

# GGEAR Co-sponsors Ninth Annual Southern Maryland Caregivers Conference

The Ninth Annual Southern Maryland Caregivers Conference will take place on April 27 in La Plata, Maryland. This event will be co-sponsored by the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research (GGEAR) program and the Charles County Office of Community Services, and is designed to bring practical information and a sense of community to professional and family caregivers.

The caregiver conference series was started in 1992, with its first program in 1993, by GGEAR in cooperation with Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties' Area Agencies on Aging. The conference location rotates among the three Southern Maryland Counties. The conference emerged from GGEAR's mandate to disseminate information to professionals and consumers. "It's an example of a very successful partnership between GGEAR and agencies throughout Southern Maryland," says GGEAR's director, Reba Cornman. Along with the area agencies on aging, the partnership includes county health departments, the Alzheimer's Association Southern Maryland office, the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, local hospices, and private and public agencies and organizations serving Southern Maryland's older population and their caregiving families.

The planning committee provides a balanced program with sensible information about caring for frail older adults and self-care for the caregiver. Topics in caregiver self-care include stress reduction techniques, nutrition, physical activity, and the use of humor.

The conference consists of plenary and breakout sessions. The 2001 program offers sessions on advocacy, managing difficult behaviors, depression and the caregiver, nutrition, medication management, adaptive equipment, legal issues, computer skills, home based activities, exercise and humor. Participants can collect information and discuss specific problems and issues with providers in the conference exhibition hall.

With an average of 200 attendees each year, the event is met with an enthusiastic registration and participant evaluations. Many individuals in the service community return annually for the program content and networking opportunities.

For more information on the Ninth Annual Southern Maryland Caregivers Conference, contact Reba Cornman at [rcornman@umaryland.edu](mailto:rcornman@umaryland.edu) or 410.706.4327.



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## GRECC Stroke Symposium

**The GRECC symposium, "Advances In Neurorehabilitation of Stroke Patients" will be held March 26, 2001, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm in the John Dennis Auditorium, Baltimore Medical Center, 10 North Greene Street. The target audience for this program is physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational and physical therapists, nursing home administrators, and other health care personnel. Faculty will address issues critical to functionality in the hemiparetic stroke patient and show that task-oriented exercise training of both the upper and lower extremities has the potential to reduce disability and enhance functionality in the performance of activities of daily living. The fee is \$45 (\$35 before March 13). To register, call the Chesapeake Health Education Program, 410.642.1195.**

# NEWS

# RESEARCH

## Highlights

### Examining Racial Differences in Metabolism of Obese Post-Menopausal Women

*The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion reports that obesity increased from 12% in 1991 to 17.9% in 1998. Obesity in the United States continued to grow in 1999 (up 6% from 1998), representing a serious public health threat to millions of Americans, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention letter to the editor published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (October 4, 2000).*

*Obesity is recognized to be a risk factor for many diseases. How excess fat is distributed on a person's body, i.e., above or below the belt, is measured by waist-to-hip ratio. Storing excess fat around the abdomen, called abdominal obesity, has been associated with heart disease, coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and other conditions. According to findings from the Iowa Women's Health Study, abdominal obesity in older women is considered to be a better predictor of mortality than general obesity.*

*Studies have shown that weight gain and abdominal obesity are observed in post-menopausal women. Most of these studies were conducted with a predominantly Caucasian population. Yet, the incidence of obesity is 49% in African American women compared with 33% in Caucasian women. African American women also have a higher incidence of diabetes than Caucasian women, and lower levels of physical activity and fitness.*



**DORA BERMAN, Ph.D.**, and **ALICE RYAN, Ph.D.**, assistant professors in the Division of Gerontology, have geared their research to look at racial disparities in body fat distribution and metabolism of postmenopausal African American and Caucasian women.

On January 11, Ryan and Berman presented their findings at

the UM Center for Research on Aging lecture series.

According to Berman, high intra-abdominal fat area and low circulating sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG) are risk factors for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease in women. "Understanding the role of sex hormones in upper body obesity and insulin resistance in older, obese African-American women could have important therapeutic and preventive health implications," says Berman. She found that in the Caucasian women there is an inverse relationship between total and central obesity and SHBG and a positive relationship between high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and SHBG. These relationships were not seen in the African Americans tested. This suggests that there are racial differences in the relationships of indices of body composition and lipid

metabolism to sex hormone binding globulin. Her findings are to be published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*.

Ryan's study is designed to determine if previously reported increased insulin resistance in African American pre-menopausal women compared to Caucasian women exists also in post-menopausal women, and whether it is related to the degree of physical fitness, obesity, and/or regional fat deposition.

"Our findings show that greater insulin resistance in African American women, when compared to similar Caucasian women, is not due to greater intra-abdominal fat but perhaps due to greater intramuscular fat," reports Ryan. She stresses the need for continued research to determine the cellular mechanisms for the differences in insulin sensitivity between Caucasian and African American women. Ryan believes that longitudinal studies are necessary to see if the greater degree of insulin resistance is associated with the high incidence of diabetes in African Americans.



Alice Ryan and Dora Berman

## GRECC Researchers Design Stroke Survivor Exercise Survey

Stroke affects almost 750,000 Americans each year. It is the leading cause of disability in the elderly, frequently rendering its victims with chronic weakness, fatigue, and mental or emotional problems that progressively diminish functional abilities and quality of life.

Investigators at the University of Maryland and VA Maryland Health Care System Baltimore Division are conducting research using exercise as a means of strengthening weakened arms and legs after stroke. Findings from these and other studies indicate that exercise can improve cardiovascular fitness levels and strength in extremities years after the original stroke event. Yet, stroke patients tend to be sedentary after discharge from rehabilitation.

MARIANNE SHAUGHNESSY, Ph.D., CRNP, is a postdoctoral research fellow and gerontological nurse practitioner investigating exercise patterns following stroke rehabilitation. Little is known about how frequently stroke survivors exercise, or their beliefs regarding their exercise. Shaughnessy, in conjunction with other stroke researchers, has created a post-stroke survey to gain insight into this area. “We designed this survey to identify patients’ knowledge and perceptions regarding level of disability from stroke, perceived fatigue, prior and current levels of activity, whether or not they received a recommendation from their doctors to exercise, and their exercise beliefs,” explains Shaughnessy. In collaboration with the National Stroke Association, she recently sent the survey to 1,200 stroke support groups throughout the United States and Canada.

More than 200 stroke survivors have responded to the survey, and additional responses are expected as the National Stroke Association plans to post the survey on their web site. Preliminary results indicate that most respondents received physical therapy after their strokes, but still had difficulties walking. Many of the respondents were not exercising at all, and few achieved the minimum of four times weekly recommended for cardiovascular fitness. Most reported some type of regular exercise prior to their stroke.



**Marianne Shaughnessy and study participant,  
David Richards**

Respondents indicate they understand the potential benefits of exercise and would like to exercise more, but don’t believe they can do so. Fatigue and depression, common consequences of stroke, may also play a role in limiting activity patterns. About half of the respondents never received recommendations for an exercise program from their physicians, and most would be interested if one were available.

“Our findings indicate a need for additional research into the actual barriers to exercise in this population. Encouraging stroke survivors to exercise can significantly improve cardiovascular fitness, walking ability and reduce risk for a recurrent cardiac or stroke event in most patients,” says Shaughnessy. She plans to request grant funding to further investigate activity patterns and design an educational program to teach stroke survivors and their families about the benefits of ongoing exercise. The proposed study will also include designing safe, individualized exercise programs and motivating patients to continue regular physical activity. Stroke survivors in this study will be monitored before and after starting an exercise program for changes in daily activity, attitudes toward exercise, and quality of life.

# Cutting Edge

# NEWS

## Faculty & Staff



**Donald E. Stull**

DONALD E. STULL, Ph.D., was appointed August 1, 2000, as senior research and associate professor in the Department of Adult Health Nursing. Prior to his appointment in the School of Nursing, Stull was associate professor of sociology at the University of Akron, Ohio. His main areas of interest are family sociology and quantitative and qualitative research methods. Much of his research has focused on family caregiving to older frail and cognitively impaired relatives, with an emphasis on quality of family life. He recently completed a two-year study funded by the National Institutes of Health analyzing changes in social support and depression in four longitudinal studies of family caregiving. He has begun to explore the quality of family life for patients with heart failure. He is currently a co-investigator evaluating the medication practices of assisted living facilities in Maryland.

CARLES MUNTANER, Ph.D., MHS, has joined the School of Nursing as an associate professor in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health and the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, School of Medicine. He is a social epidemiologist in the area of work organization and mental health, and has conducted



**Carles Muntaner**

research on the work organization of long term care, such as nursing homes and home care. In the last five years, Muntaner has begun to examine the health effects of nursing home work organization on workers' mental health. He also continues his research on socioeconomic and race/ethnic inequalities in health and in the utilization of health services.



**Andrew Coggan**

ANDREW COGGAN, Ph.D., associate professor, Division of Gerontology and VA Maryland Health Care System GRECC, has been named the 2000 Walter R. Cottman International Visiting Fellow by Monash University School of Medicine in Melbourne, Australia. This award will pay his travel costs to Melbourne and living expenses from February 2-23. During this time Coggan will be lecturing on stable isotope tracer methodology, learning new techniques while working in the laboratory of Dr. Glenn McConell in the Department of Physiology, and attending the annual scientific meeting of the Australian Physiological and Pharmacological Society.

THOMAS E. FINUCANE, M.D., Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, and DIANE HOFFMANN, UM School of Law, gave a Center for Research on Aging presentation entitled "Quality of Life at the End of Life: Two Views" on October 26 before an audience of over 100 faculty, students and professionals from the greater Baltimore area.



**Thomas Finucane and Diane Hoffman**

CONSTANCE SALTZ CORLEY, Ph.D., School of Social Work, has been made a Fellow of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, which will become effective at the annual meeting in San Jose (February, 2001). Corley appeared on WBAL, Channel 11 in November and December speaking on the topics of older voters and older people and their reaction to the holiday season. She was also interviewed by the *Ohio News-Herald* about violence and older adults.

# 2001 “Geriatric Imperative” Minimester



Minimester students and the “Boothettes”

The Geriatric Imperative Minimester elective, an introduction to interprofessional collaboration in geriatrics, was held January 8–12. The course was attended by 75 students from the schools of Nursing, Social Work, Pharmacy the Dental School; and the Department of Physical Therapy, and is planned under the auspices of the GGEAR Program.

The final session of the course, The Senior Center Experience, is given each year by the John Booth Senior Center in East Baltimore. The center director, June Goldfield, and senior participants talked about the role of the center in keeping mentally, socially and physically active. The “Boothettes” are photographed demonstrating one of their aerobic dance routines. Some of the minimester students joined them on stage.

**The Lamy Center on Drug Therapy and Aging** at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy is sponsoring the 18th Annual Lamy Conference May 2 at Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City, Maryland. This year will continue the successful venue of concurrent sessions in clinical and policy-focused presentations. The conference entitled “Building Bridges in Drug Therapy and Aging: Partnering Clinicians and Researchers” will feature topics on end-of-life care, older women’s health, Alzheimer’s disease, the Medicare drug benefit, HIV in the elderly and substance abuse in the elderly. It is an interdisciplinary program providing continuing education credits for nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and social workers.

There is a growing interest in medication-related issues affecting the elderly. Planners anticipate an audience of approximately 250 representing pharmacy, nursing, and other health care professionals from Maryland and surrounding states. The keynote speaker is Dr. Jerry Gurwitz and his presentation “To Err is Human: Making Medication Use Safer for Elderly Patients” builds on his research on drug use among nursing home patients.

For more information, please contact Ilene Verovsky at 410.706.1497.

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#### **Editorial Staff**

**L. Jean Hetmanski**

**Nancy Volkers**

# CALENDAR *of Events*

**A listing of educational programs on aging research and clinical practice in the mid-Atlantic region. Contact information is listed with each program.**

## **February 15, 2001**

UM Center for Research on Aging  
**Center for Research on Aging  
Lecture Series**

*Carmen Morano, Ph.D., School of Social Work, and Donald Stull, Ph.D., School of Nursing*  
John Dennis Auditorium  
Baltimore VA Medical Center  
Baltimore, Maryland  
410.706.4567 or  
[smiller@epi.umaryland.edu](mailto:smiller@epi.umaryland.edu)

## **February 22-25, 2001**

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education  
**26th Annual Conference**  
San Jose, California  
[www.aghe.org](http://www.aghe.org)

## **February 26-28, 2001**

SPRY Foundation  
**Older Adults, Health Information and the World Wide Web**  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, Maryland  
202.216.0401 or [www.spry.org](http://www.spry.org)

## **March 1, 2001**

UM Center for Research on Aging  
**2nd Annual Gerontology Poster Day**  
UMB Medical Student Teaching Facility  
410.706.4567 or  
[smiller@epi.umaryland.edu](mailto:smiller@epi.umaryland.edu)

## **March 1, 2001**

Maryland Gerontological Association  
Lecture  
*Barbara Resnick, Ph.D.*  
Roland Park Place  
Baltimore, Maryland  
[mdgeron@aol.com](mailto:mdgeron@aol.com)

## **March 8, 2001**

Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center  
**5th Semi-Annual Geriatric Symposium**  
Salisbury State University  
Salisbury, Maryland  
410.221.2600 or [jbromwel@esahec.org](mailto:jbromwel@esahec.org)

## **March 8-11, 2001**

American Society on Aging and National Council on Aging  
**Designing Our Future @ aging.community**  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
[www.asaging.org](http://www.asaging.org)

## **March 26, 2001**

GRECC, Department of Veterans Affairs Employee Education System and Chesapeake Health Education Program Symposium  
**Advances In Neurorehabilitation of Stroke Patients**  
John Dennis Auditorium  
Baltimore VA Medical Center  
410.642.1195

## **April 4-7, 2001**

Southern Gerontological Society  
**22nd Annual Southern Gerontological Society Conference**  
Lexington, Kentucky  
423.439.6275, or [Lloyd@atsu.edu](mailto:Lloyd@atsu.edu)

## **May 2, 2001**

UM School of Pharmacy 18th Annual Lamy Conference  
**Building Bridges in Drug Therapy and Aging: Partnering Clinicians and Researchers**  
Turf Valley Resort  
Ellicott City, Maryland  
410.706.1497

## **May 4, 2001**

Maryland Gerontological Association Annual Conference  
**Health Care: Friend or Foe?**  
Sheraton BWI  
Baltimore, Maryland  
[mdgeron@aol.com](mailto:mdgeron@aol.com)

## **May 9-13, 2001**

American Geriatrics Society Annual Meeting  
**Caring for Older Adults: Innovations in Research and Practice**  
Chicago, Illinois  
<http://americangeriatrics.org>

## **July 1-6, 2001**

International Association of Gerontology 17th World Congress  
**Working Together in a Changing World**  
Vancouver, Canada  
[www.barbour.sfu.ca/iagl/](http://www.barbour.sfu.ca/iagl/)

## **July 7-11, 2001**

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging 26th Annual Conference  
**2001: An Aging Odyssey**  
Boston, Massachusetts  
[www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)

## **July 15-18, 2001**

National Alzheimer's Disease Education Conference  
**New Directions in Alzheimer Care**  
Chicago, Illinois  
[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

## Abbreviations

UM - *University of Maryland*  
UMB - *University of Maryland, Baltimore campus*  
GGEAR - *UM Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research Program*  
GRECC - *Baltimore VA Maryland Health Care System Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center*

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