Research in Aging

Kent State University - Kent Campus

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Dear Colleagues,

Over 30 researchers and clinicians from across nine colleges at Kent State University are investigating key behavioral, biological, clinical, physiological and societal aspects of aging and are developing therapies, technologies and interventions to address many of these challenges. We are focusing on such diverse issues as chronic illness self-management, diabetic foot wound healing, elderly housing choices, healthcare facility design, family caregiving, neurodegeneration, resilience and well-being and many others.

Please consider this directory as a valuable resource for current information about Kent State research initiatives in aging. I encourage you to contact the researchers and clinicians profiled here directly for further details on their important work.

If you would like additional information about other research programs or for partnering opportunities with us, please contact me at research@kent.edu or 330-672-0717, and visit www.kent.edu/research.

Grant McGimpsey, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
Kent State University
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Ju di th Gere, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PSYCHOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., University of Toronto

Research Keywords: Well-Being; Goal Pursuit; Health Goals; Chronic Illness; Close Relationships; Social/Personality Psychology; Health Psychology

Research Area: Dr. Gere's research focuses on the pursuit of goals in the context of close relationships and its influences on physical and psychological health. Areas of particular interest are intimate relationship influences on the pursuit of health goals (e.g., healthy eating, exercise), and couples’ management of personal and relational goals in the context of chronic illness.

Research Publications:


Manacy Pai, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, SOCIOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., Florida State University

Research Keywords: Aging and Health; Sociology of Families; Health Disparities

Research Area: Dr. Pai's research focuses on how mental, physical and social health outcomes emerge in the context of later life family, work and care transitions. She also examines how personal resources influence formal and informal decision-making related to end-of-life care. In her current project on end-of-life care, she is assessing hospital providers' perspectives on palliative care and how these perspectives are shaped by the medical and organizational cultures in which care providers work, learn and practice medicine.

Research Publications:


Nadia Greenhalgh-Stanley, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ECONOMICS

Education: Ph.D., Syracuse University

Research Keywords: Long-Term Care; Elderly Responses to Social Insurance Programs; Elderly Housing and Portfolio Choices; Access to Housing; Access to Nutritious Food

Research Area: Dr. Greenhalgh-Stanley's research primarily focuses on the elderly's response to changes in social insurance programs, including Medicaid, Medicare and SNAP. Her work also focuses on long-term care needs and how that impacts elderly homeownership and asset decisions. Her work has been funded by the MacArthur Foundation, Social Security Administration, and United States Department of Agriculture.

Research Publications:


Jeffrey S. Hallam, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR AND CHAIR, SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Education: Ph.D., The Ohio State University

Research Keywords: Physical Activity; Older Adults; Theory

Research Area: Dr. Hallam's research focuses on developing and testing theory-based interventions to increase physical activity across the lifespan. Recent investigations examine the characteristics of long-time older adult exercisers and the use of a mobility framework to develop effective physical activity interventions for older adults.

Research Publications:


Dana Hansen, Ph.D., R.N.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF NURSING

Education: Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University

Research Keywords: Family Relationships at the End of Life; Comfort; Life-Closure

Research Area: The purpose of my research is to explore family interactions and relationships at the end of life. Often, families are uncertain of what to say or how to interact with their dying loved one during this difficult and stressful time. Ultimately, I hope to discover important and unique aspects of family relationships at the end of life that will improve care of both the patient and family.

Research Publications:


Gregory C. Smith, Ed.D.
PROFESSOR, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES
DIRECTOR, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Education: Ed.D., University of Rochester

Research Keywords: Family Caregiving; Stress and Coping; Psychological Well-Being; Chronic Illness Self-Management; Life Span Development; Resilience

Research Area: Dr. Smith’s research focuses primarily on informal caregiving within later life families from a stress and coping perspective and has included such populations as caregivers to the frail elderly, older parents of adults with severe lifelong disabilities (e.g., mental retardation, mental illness), grandparents raising grandchildren and spousal caregivers of stroke survivors. His research in these areas has been funded by the National Institute on Aging; the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute of Nursing Research. Dr. Smith is editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* and he is a fellow of both the Gerontological Society of America and the American Psychological Association.

Research Publications:

Pam Stephenson, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF NURSING

Education: Ph.D., Kent State University

Research Keywords: End of Life; Spirituality; Uncertainty

Research Area: Dr. Stephenson is currently developing the construct of spiritual uncertainty as it applies to persons nearing the end of life because of medical illness. She is also interested in how spiritual uncertainties affect persons in other types of life-threatening situations such as violent crimes and natural disasters.

Research Publications:


Mei-Chen Lin, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Education: Ph.D., University of Kansas

Research Keywords: Aging and Communication; Caregiving and Aging Family; Identity Work; Family Communication; Intergenerational Communication; Elder Abuse

Research Area: Dr. Lin’s research focuses on communication issues related to one’s aging process and the ways in which the older individual manages and negotiates age identity when interacting with other peers, family members and the younger generation. She also examines communicative issues that give rise to elder abuse as a result of problematic caregiving interaction. Her research also expands to other types of intergroup relationships, such as political identity and media use.

Research Publications:

• Haridakis, P.; Hanson, G.; Lin, M.-C.; McCullough, L. J. “Fitting social media into the media landscape during a 2012 Republican primary.” In J. A. Hendricks & D. Schill (eds.), Presidential Campaigning and Social Media. CO: Paradigm Publisher., pp. 106-121.


Kelly Cichy, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

Education: Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University

Research Keywords: Conflict; Social Support; Family Stress; Culture/Race/Ethnicity; Parent-Adult Child Relationships

Research Area: Dr. Cichy’s research examines the links between social relationships and health via two related lines of inquiry. Her first line of inquiry seeks to understand the health implications of stressful experiences involving family (e.g., conflict, social support demands), particularly within African American families. Her second line of inquiry focuses on family relationships in later life and explores how experiences in this tie have implications for both aging parents and their adult children. Across both lines of inquiry, her research combines different methodological approaches, including videotaped observations and daily diary procedures to better understand how negative relational experiences influence health and well-being during adulthood.

Research Publications:

Nichole Egbert, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Education: Ph.D., University of Georgia

Research Keywords: Caregiving; Social Support Processes; Health Literacy; Health and Spirituality

Research Area: Dr. Egbert’s research interests focus on the ways in which communication processes facilitate and inhibit social support in health contexts, with particular focus on communication in caregiving situations.

Research Publications:
Gemma Casadesus Smith, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Education: Ph.D., Tufts University

Research Keywords: Neuronal Aging; Alzheimer’s Disease; Neuroendocrinology; Oxidative Stress; Neuronal Metabolism

Research Area: The goal of my laboratory is to understand the neuroendocrinological, oxidative, and metabolic mechanisms underlying learning and memory function and neuronal plasticity; particularly how changes in metabolic, oxidative, and reproductive molecules and hormones influence the age-associated memory and neuronal plasticity loss and how these changes may influence the development of Alzheimer disease (AD). Particular focus is placed on finding preventative therapeutic strategies for AD.

Research Publications:


Haiyan Zhu, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Education: Ph.D., University of Kentucky

Research Keywords: Neuroscience; Aging; Age-related Disease

Research Area: Dr. Zhu’s research focuses on macromolecular isolation and analyses, aging and age-related neurodegenerative disease study, as well as human genetics association study; more specifically, using molecular and genetic association methods to identify Alzheimer’s disease-associated genetic risk factors.

Research Publications:

Ellen L. Glickman, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR, EXERCISE SCIENCE/PHYSIOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh

Research Keywords: Exercise Physiology; Aging; Risk Factors of Cardiovascular Disease and Aging; Exercise in Attenuating Risk Factor Progression

Research Area: Dr. Glickman's research focus has primarily been on the enhancement of health and well-being in the older adult. She has collaborated with her colleagues in psychology and focused on the enhancement of physical activity and its relation to cognitive function, depression, sleep and profile of mood state as well as learning across the lifespan. Further, Dr. Glickman has conducted research in the clinical (i.e., cardiac rehabilitation) realm and has just commenced a faculty/staff exercise program that focuses on activity and the physiological and psychological well-being of the participant assessing their exercise behaviors via a Movbands and an exercise intervention.

Research Publications:


Angela Ridgel, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, EXERCISE SCIENCE/PHYSIOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., Marshall University

Research Keywords: Parkinson's Disease; Motor Control; Rehabilitation; Cognition; Aging

Research Area: Dr. Ridgel's research is focused on how aging and neurological disorders limit movement and cognition in humans. One of her current research projects examines how exercise can be used for neuro-rehabilitation in elderly individuals and those with Parkinson's disease. She is currently examining how motor and sensory interventions can improve balance, posture and gait in these populations. Her research is funded through a National Institutes of Health R21 grant. She has ongoing research collaborations with Cleveland Clinic, University Hospital, Case Western Reserve University and Rockwell Automation.

Research Publications:

J. Derek Kingsley, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, EXERCISE SCIENCE/PHYSIOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., Florida State University

Research Keywords: Fibromyalgia; Resistance Exercise; Autonomic Modulation; Arterial Stiffness

Research Area: Dr. Kingsley's research is focused on how aging affects autonomic and vascular function. His primary research emphasis is on utilizing resistance exercise training as a therapy for women with fibromyalgia. He has also examined the responses of the cardiovascular to resistance exercise training in older women.

Research Publications:

Qunxing Ding, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Education: Ph.D., Chinese Agricultural University

Research Keywords: Aging; Neurodegeneration; Protein Aggregation; Protein Glycation

Research Area: Dr. Ding's research focuses on molecular mechanisms in aging and neurodegeneration processes, especially the genetic and biochemical alteration such as that in protein synthesis, modification and degradation.

Research Publications:
Abe Osbourne, D.P.M., M.B.A.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PODIATRIC MEDICINE, COLLEGE OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE

Education: D.P.M., Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine; M.B.A., Indiana Wesleyan University; D.GRT. (Gerontology), University of Toronto.

Research Keywords: Balance and Aging; Seniors and Falls

Research Area: Dr. Osbourne is interested in the role that podiatric medicine can play in fall prevention of the elderly.

Research Publications:

Yea-Jyh Chen, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF NURSING

Education: Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University

Research Keywords: Chronicity; Self-Care; Symptom Management; Quality of Life; Rehospitalization; Patient Outcomes

Research Area: Dr. Chen’s research focuses on exploring effective interventions using a self-management approach to enhance patient outcomes among adult/elderly people with chronicity. Her ultimate research goal is to work toward improving patient health care and quality of life for patients with chronic illness, especially cancer patients and their families in the community.

Research Publications:
John Gunstad, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PSYCHOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., The Ohio University

Research Keywords: Neuropsychology; Memory Loss; Obesity; Cardiovascular Disease

Research Area: Dr. Gunstad's research focuses on the adverse effects of medical conditions like obesity and cardiovascular disease on the brain and identifying treatments to reverse them.

Research Publications:


Vincent J. Hetherington, D.P.M.
SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN AND PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY, COLLEGE OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE

Education: D.P.M., Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine

Research Keywords: Hallux Valgus; Foot Function; Diabetic Foot; Wound Healing; Small Joint Replacement; Biomaterials; Foot Surgery

Research Area: Dr. Hetherington’s research focuses on the study and management of foot pathology including common deformities, the complication of diabetes and application of novel biomaterial.

Research Publications:


Joel W. Hughes, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PSYCHOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., The Ohio State University

Research Keywords: Health Psychology; Cardiovascular Psychophysiology; Patient Self-Management

Research Area: Dr. Hughes' research interests are in clinical health psychology. In particular, his research focuses on understanding how psychosocial factors such as depression increase cardiovascular risk. A more recent additional interest is the role of psychosocial factors in patient self-management of cardiovascular conditions including mHealth (mobile health) interventions.

Research Publications:


Carol A. Sediak, Ph.D., R.N.
PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF NURSING

Education: Ph.D., Kent State University

Research Keywords: Bone Health; Osteoporosis Prevention; Women's Health; Men's Health; Behavior Change; Health Promotion; Aging and Chronic Disease; Musculoskeletal Injury; Safe Patient Handling; Nursing Education

Research Area: Dr. Sediak's research focuses on musculoskeletal health, particularly bone health, osteoporosis prevention, and behavior change in understudied populations (men, postmenopausal women, aging transgender individuals). Her research on men and osteoporosis was one of the first nursing research studies to address bone health in men. Dr. Sediak's research on prevention of musculoskeletal injuries from lifting and moving patients has resulted in partnering with interdisciplinary national organizations including the American Nurses Association and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Research Publications:

Wendy Umberger, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF NURSING

Education: Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University

Research Keywords: Chronic Non-Cancer Pain; Psychological Factors in Chronic Pain; Families' Responses to Chronic Pain; Therapeutic Opioid Addiction; Complementary Therapies for Chronic Pain

Research Area: Dr. Umberger’s research focuses on studying the effects of complementary therapies (e.g., guided imagery) on pain and function for persons with chronic pain, therapeutic opioid addiction in persons with chronic pain, and family members' experiences and coping when a member has chronic pain.

Research Publications:
• Lewandowski (Umberger), W.; Jacobson, A. “Bridging the gap between mind and body: A biobehavioral model of the effects of guided imagery on pain, pain disability, and depression.” Pain Management Nursing. 2013, 14, 368-378.

Jill S. Kawalec, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF BASIC SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE

Education: Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University

Research Keywords: Orthopaedic Biomaterials; Cartilage Repair and Replacement; Diabetic Foot Complications; Clinical Trials

Research Area: Dr. Kawalec’s research has focused on orthopaedic biomaterials for joint replacement. Specific areas have included mixed-metal fretting corrosion of orthopaedic alloys, the use of pyrolytic carbon for hemiarthroplasties, and texturing pyrolytic carbon to enhance biological fixation. Dr. Kawalec has also researched the use of biological materials for the repair of osteochondral defects. Most recently, Dr. Kawalec’s research has focused on the prevention and treatment of diabetic foot complications, including diabetic foot ulcers.

Research Publications:
Ann Jacobson, Ph.D., R.N.
PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF NURSING

Education: Ph.D., Texas Woman's University

Research Keywords: Biobehavioral Models and Interventions for Total Knee Replacement; Guided Imagery; Mixed Methods; Self-Management

Research Area: Dr. Jacobson's research focuses on testing biobehavioral models and complementary therapies for persons experiencing procedural pain and for those undergoing knee arthroplasty. She is also investigating factors that enhance outcomes for people with chronic conditions.

Research Publications:

Kathy J. Siesel, D.P.M.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PODIATRIC BIOMECHANICS/ORTHOPEDICS, COLLEGE OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE

Education: D.P.M., Kent State University

Research Keywords: Sports Medicine; Elder Foot Care; Running Injuries

Research Area: Dr. Siesel's current research focuses on running injuries sustained during long distance events. Her previous research focused on anatomic anomalies.

Research Publications:
Melissa D. Zullo, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.A.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, EPIDEMIOLOGY

Education: Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University

Research Keywords: Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Disease Management, Quality Improvement, Large Databases

Research Area: Dr. Zullo’s research interests are in secondary prevention of cardiac and pulmonary morbidity and related disability. She has large database expertise having worked with Chronic Conditions Warehouse National Medicare Data, MedPAR, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Dr. Zullo has been funded through the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to examine disability, illness burden and transitions of care to cardiac rehabilitation in older adults after a myocardial infarction.

Research Publications:

Rebecca Meehan, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Education: Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University

Research Keywords: Health Informatics and Aging; Usability of Health Technology; User Experience of Health Technology; Long-Term Care; Health Informatics and Medicine; Wellness Informatics; User Experience of Wellness Technology

Research Area: Dr. Meehan's work focuses on user experience of health technology and aging and health informatics. She has a background in gerontology, medical sociology and enterprise software.

Research Publications:

Patricia Vermeersch, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF NURSING

Education: Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University

Research Keywords: Gerontological Nursing; Geriatric Nursing; Geriatric Syndromes; Technology for Aging and Education

Research Area: Dr. Vermeersch's career has focused on two main areas: geriatric syndromes including delirium, dementia, and more recently, falls and dehydration. In addition she has examined the use of remote presence robots to oversee a geriatric simulation and explore the capabilities for care delivery.
Margaret Calkins, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
DIRECTOR, MASTER OF HEALTHCARE DESIGN PROGRAM

Education: Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Research Keywords: Aging, Health Care, Dementia, Falls, Way Finding, Safety, Long-Term Care, Evidence-based Design

Research Area: Dr. Calkins' research focuses on understanding and creating supportive living and health care settings. People living with dementia and elders are a particular focus, as are their care partners in all settings.

Research Publications:
Partnering with Kent State Research

For more information on ways to partner with Kent State University’s Division of Research and Sponsored Programs, please contact:

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