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VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center

Summer 2007

No More Battlefields: End of Life Care For Veterans

The GRECC and the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's Hospice-Palliative Care Program jointly co-sponsored the conference "No More Battlefields: End of Life Care for Veterans" held at the Highland Drive campus on May 21, 2007. The goal of this program was to increase the knowledge of providers within the VA system and the community of the unique needs of veterans at the end of life. More than 1,800 veterans die each day in this country, representing over a quarter of all deaths in the U.S., and studies have found that veterans' end of life preferences differ from that of non-veterans. The conference was attended by 137 physicians, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals from VA Pittsburgh and several other VISN 4 facilities; from VA hospitals in Alabama, Ohio, and Maine; from the VA Central Office in Washington, DC; and from several community hospitals and hospice facilities in the Pittsburgh region. The main speakers were Dr. VJ Periyakoil from the VA Palo Alto Health Care System who spoke on "PTSD at

the End of Life" and Dr. Robert Arnold from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine who spoke on "Addiction and Pain at the End of Life." Dr. Periyakoil is an Internist, Geriatrician, and Hospice and Palliative Medicine physician who directs the VA Nationwide Palliative Care Program. She is a nationally recognized leader in virtual education and cross-cultural issues in hospice and palliative care. Dr. Arnold is currently a faculty scholar on the Project on Death in America and is working to teach physician leaders how to educate peers to better communicate regarding ethical, psychosocial, and existential issues at the end of life. The program was made possible by an unrestricted educational grant from HPC Foundation for Hospice Care which was received through the efforts of course co-directors Richard Deakin, MSW, social worker in the VA Pittsburgh Hospice-Palliative Care Unit and Emily Jaffe, MD, GRECC Staff Physician and attending physician on the VA Pittsburgh Geriatric Palliative Care Unit.

2007 Outstanding Primary Care Physician of the Year



Steven H. Graham, MD, PhD, Emily Jaffe, MD, MBA, and Rajiv Jain, MD

Dr. Emily Jaffe, GRECC Staff Physician, has been selected by the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System as the 2007 Outstanding Primary Care Physician of the Year. Dr. Jaffe was recognized for her dedication to excellence in patient care and for her outstanding contributions to education, performance improvement, and innovations in healthcare. She is recognized also for the development of the Geriatric Palliative Care Unit and for her promotion of extensive patient and family education to meet the challenges of decision-making related to cure vs. comfort care. Dr. Rajiv Jain, Chief of Staff presented the award during this year's Doctor's Day Program.

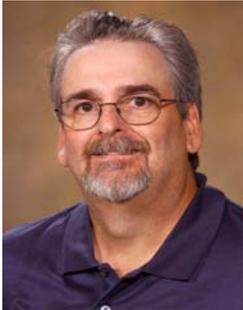
VA Rehabilitation and Research Career Scientist Award



Malcolm R. McNeil, Ph.D. is a GRECC Core Research Scientist who has received a VA Rehabilitation and Research Career Scientist Award. Dr. McNeil has been funded by the Department of Veteran's Affairs for over 30 years and is one of the nation's foremost experts in the assessment and treatment of adult neurogenic language and motor speech disorders. His current VA research program includes development of the Computerized Revised Token Test (CRTT) and its application to the assessment of aphasia and other language disorders. Additionally, Dr. McNeil is currently using electromagnetic articulography to investigate the effects of kinematic and acoustic feedback on sound

production in the treatment of apraxia of speech (AOS). With his colleague, Dr. Patrick Doyle, he is also engaged in the development of the Burden of Stroke Scale (BOSS), a patient reported measure of functioning and well being for stroke survivors. In addition to being an internationally invited speaker, an author and co-author of numerous books, book chapters and peer-reviewed manuscripts, Dr. McNeil has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors. These include the Honors of the Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders and Sciences, Honors of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, University of Pittsburgh's Chancellor's Research Award, and University of Pittsburgh Distinguished Service Professor Award. This highly competitive Office of Research and Development award funds Dr. McNeil's VA salary for the balance of his VA career independent of Merit Review funding.

American Geriatrics Society's Edward Henderson Award



Joseph T. Hanlon, PharmD, MS, Professor of Pharmacy and Geriatric Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh, and VA Research Health Scientist (Pittsburgh VA CHERP and GRECC) is the 2007 recipient of the American Geriatrics Society's Edward Henderson Award.

The Henderson award goes to an individual whose research and publications elucidate and help remediate the problems inherent in elder care. The award is named for the late Dr. Edward Henderson, who helped estab-

lish the field of geriatrics and held many leadership positions in the society. As a Henderson award recipient, Dr. Hanlon delivered a "State-of-the-Art Lecture" on May 3, 2007 during the American Geriatrics Society's annual meeting in Seattle.

Dr. Hanlon's talk focused on the frequency of adverse drug reactions, adverse drug withdrawal events and therapeutic failure in geriatric populations. He outlined successful and promising strategies for addressing this public health crisis in older adults. Dr. Hanlon has been continuously funded as a researcher since 1987 in the areas of pharmacoepidemiology and health services interventions to improve drug therapy for the elderly.

Geriatrics and Extended Care Conference

Over 100 GRECC colleagues from VA facilities throughout the country assembled in Pittsburgh May 22-24 for the National Geriatric and Extended Care Leadership Conference sponsored by the VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC). The conference provided an opportunity for attendees to discuss and review the role of GEC programs in the continuum of veterans' care. GRECC Director Steven H. Graham, MD, PhD served on the planning committee for the conference and GRECC Staff made the following presentations:

Joseph Hanlon, PharmD "Polypharmacy"

Emily Jaffe, MD, MBA "Palliative Care Decisions in the Management of Veterans with Dementia"

Michele Rossi, MD, MPH "Geriatric Primary Care and 'Usual' Primary Care"

Stephanie Studenski, MD, MPH "Morbidity Issues in Nursing Homes"

Who's new in the GRECC?



Mary Ann Sevick, ScD, RN

Dr. Mary Ann Sevick is a nurse with doctoral training in health services research, and post-doctoral training in ethics and economics. She has been involved in several single-site and multicenter

clinical trials involving behavior change interventions. She is currently involved in an NIH-funded study to test the effectiveness of a PDA-based adherence enhancement intervention for individuals with type 2 diabetes. With

funding from the Paul Teschan Fund and NIH she is currently testing PDA-based self-monitoring interventions to control sodium intake in hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis patients.

Wesley Farris, MD

Wesley Farris, MD joined the GRECC from the laboratory of Dennis Selkoe at Brigham and Women's Hospital at Harvard Medical School last fall. Dr. Farris was formerly Chief Resident in Neurology of the Partner's Residency program. Dr. Farris is the recipient of a career development award from the NIA to study the role of metabo-

lism of β -amyloid in Alzheimer's Disease. His VA merit review application addresses the development of β -amyloid deposits and behavioral symptoms in mice that express a human form of amyloid precursor protein and lack the insulin degrading enzyme (IDE), that also degrades β -amyloid.



John Hennon, EdD

John G. Hennon, EdD joined the GRECC in January 2007 as Associate Director for Education and Evaluation. He oversees the trainee education program of the GRECC, organizes educational offerings for VA employees, and works with clinical staff on evaluations of clinical demonstration projects. Dr. Hennon is also a Research Associate in the Division of Geriatric Medicine, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and Co-Director of the Geriatric Education Center of Pennsylvania, a statewide consortium consisting of the University of Pittsburgh, Penn State University, and Temple University. His current research activities center on educational outcomes and educational program evaluation.

David Pasquale, DO, CMD

David Pasquale, DO, CMD serves as a staff physician for the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) and Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) programs. He serves as the Medical Director of the Benedum Geriatric Center at UPMC. In this

role, Dr. Pasquale provides geriatric primary care and consultative services. He is also a fellowship trained board certified Geriatrician and Medical Director. Dr. Pasquale is Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh and a Key Clinical Faculty for the Geriatric Fellowship. Care of the frail elderly is his area of interest.



GRECC Friday Conference Series



The GRECC Friday Conference Series at the University Drive Division will resume on September 7, 2007. The GRECC offers an array of CME programs to staff at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. The Friday conferences at the Pittsburgh VA reach a diverse audience of physicians, trainees and affiliated health care professionals with varied interests in aging. Physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, speech pathologists and dentists receive CME/CEU credits for attending the conferences. All other VA employees receive one hour to-

wards their 40 hours mandatory training requirement. In addition, we are beginning to schedule for the next academic year and we are seeking speakers. If you or someone else you may know, can speak on issues related to the elderly, please let us know.

If you would like to be added to the e-mail list to receive announcements of upcoming seminars and other GRECC presentations, call the GRECC office at (412) 365-5756.



GRECC Friday Conferences at Heinz

The GRECC is presenting its second annual summer lecture and case conference series at the Heinz Division Fridays at noon. One hour of CME and CEU credits will be provided for each program. All programs will be held in the Directors Conference Room (1A109). This year's speakers and topics are:

July 6	Steven Graham, MD, PhD – Acute Alteration of Consciousness
July 13	Michelle Rossi, MD; Jennifer Mentz, MSN – Case Presentation
July 20	Wesley Farris, MD – Overview of Dementia
July 27	Hollis Day, MD – Case Presentation
August 3	Shelia Pratt, PhD – Hearing Loss & Auditory Feedback in Speech Production
August 10	Judith Plowman, MD – Case Presentation
August 17	Mary Ann Sevick, ScD – Dietary Adherence in Hemodialysis
August 24	David Pasquale, DO – Case Presentation

Upcoming Lectures

Joseph Hanlon, PharmD

Case Based Lectures on Psychotropic
Drug Use in the Elderly

Part I, II, & III.

Dates: July 12th, August 9th & August 30th

GRECC Newsletter

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Steven H. Graham, MD, PhD
GRECC Director
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare Center
Pittsburgh, PA

Executive Editor

John Hennon, EdD
Associate Director/Education GRECC

Managing Editor Graphic Designer

Juanita Chapman, BS
Administrative Officer GRECC

Editorial Board

Patrick Doyle, PhD
Associate Director/Research GRECC

Steven H. Graham, MD, PhD
GRECC Director

John Hennon, EdD
Associate Director/Education GRECC

Michelle Rossi, MD, MPH
Associate Director/Clinical Care GRECC

Photographer

Warren A. Park
VAPHS Medical Media

Phone: 412-365-5756
Fax: 412-365-5768

Article submissions, e-mail:
juanita.chapman@va.gov

GRECC VA Investigator Initiated Research

- VA RR&D Merit Review Project "[Assessing Visual and Auditory Language Processing Modalities in Aphasia](#)" Malcom McNeil, Ph.D.
 VA RR&D Merit Review Project "[Biofeedback Treatment of Apraxia of Speech Following Stroke](#)" Malcom McNeil, Ph.D.
 VA RR&D Merit Review Project "[Cognitive and Linguistic Mechanisms of Language Performance in Aphasia](#)" Patrick J. Doyle, Ph.D.
 VA RR&D Merit Review Project "[Communicative Functioning in Neurogenic Speech/Language Disorders](#)" Patrick J. Doyle, Ph.D.
 VA RR&D Merit Review Project "[Effect of Practice with Feedback on Aging Voice Motor](#)" Patrick J. Doyle, Ph.D.
 VA RR&D Merit Review Project "[Effects of Sensory Hearing Loss on Auditory Language Processing in Aphasia](#)" Sheila Pratt, Ph.D.
 VA BLR&D Merit Review Project "[FAS Mediated Cell Death in Cerebral Ischemia](#)" Steven H. Graham, MD, Ph.D.
 VA BLR&D Merit Review Project "[Gene Therapy for Cachexia](#)" Paula Clemens, MD
 VA RR&D Merit Review Project "[Hearing Loss and Enhancing the Auditory-Visual Context Effect](#)" Sheila Pratt, Ph.D.
 VA BLR&D Merit Review Project "[Heat Shock Proteins and Neuroprotection in Cerebral Ischemia](#)" Jun Chen, MD

GRECC Publications

- McNeil, M.R., Sung, J.E., Yang, D., **Pratt, S.R.**, Fossett, T. R.D., Pavelko, S. & **Doyle, P.J.** (2007). Comparing connected language elicitation procedures in persons with aphasia: Concurrent validation of the Story Retell Procedure. *Aphasiology*, 21, 775-790.
- Hemming ML, Selkoe DJ, **Farris W.** (2007) Effects of prolonged angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor treatment on amyloid beta-protein metabolism in mouse models of Alzheimer disease. *Neurobiol Dis.* 26, 273-81.
- Kim M, Hersh LB, Leissring MA, Ingelsson M, Matsui T, **Farris W**, Lu A, Hyman BT, Selkoe DJ, Bertram L, Tanzi RE. Decreased catalytic activity of the insulin-degrading enzyme in chromosome 10-linked Alzheimer disease families. *Bio Chem.* 2007 Mar 16; 282 (11):7825-32.
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- Handler SM, Castle NG, **Studenski SA**, Perera S, Fridsma DB, Nace DA, **Hanlon JT.** Patient safety culture assessment in the nursing home. *Qual Saf Health Care.* 2006 Dec;15(6):400-4.
- Clark RS, Nathaniel PD, Zhang X, Dixon CE, Alber Sm, Watkins SC, Melick JA, Kochanek PM, **Graham SH.** Boc-Aspartyl(OMe)-fluoromethylketone attenuates mitochondrial release of cytochrome c and delays brain tissue loss after traumatic brain injury in rats. *J Cereb Blood Flow Metab.* 2007 Feb;27(2):316-26.
- Zhang X, Alber S, Watkins SC, Kochanek PM, Marion DW, **Graham SH**, Clark RS. Proteolysis consistent with activation of caspase-7 after severe traumatic brain injury in humans. *J Neurotrauma.* 2006 Nov;23(11):1583-90.
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- Arnold RM, **Jaffe E.** Why palliative care needs geriatrics. *J Palliat Med.* 2007 Feb;10(1):182-3.

