

UK Elder Care

IN THE KNOW

E-Newsletter
May 2009



A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

May is Older American's Month. This month reflects a celebration to the older Americans and their families for their contribution in our society. I encourage everyone to take time this month to honor older adults, professionals, family members, and citizens who care for them. Our efforts can improve the lives of our older citizens and help pave the way for future generations. In celebration of Older American's month, you will find several programs and events in the community to show appreciation to older adults as well as caregivers! Here at the University, you can attend ***Navigating the Maze of Elder Care Resources***, scheduled May 14th from Noon – 1p.m. in Scovell Hall, Rm. 220. Please check out the campus/community events section below for more details about other programs! For more information about Older Americans Month, visit the Administration on Aging web site: www.aoa.gov.



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Discussing End-of-Life Care Lowers Cost: U.S. Study

Terminally ill patients who talk over end-of-life treatments with their doctors spend less money and do not die any sooner but die more peacefully than those receiving aggressive care, researchers said on Monday.

Patients who have the discussion tend to opt for cheaper palliative care in a hospice or at home rather than costly treatments like emergency resuscitation, ventilators to breathe for them and movement to a hospital's intensive care unit.

The goal of palliative care is to relieve suffering rather than to halt progression or cure the disease.

If half of the estimated 566,000 American adult cancer patients who died in 2008 had the end-of-life discussion, the projected savings would conservatively be \$77 million, according to a report published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

U.S. policymakers are hoping to find ways to rein in soaring healthcare costs, and researchers said end-of-life care merits a close look.

One third of expenses in the last year of life are spent in the final month, according to the report, with aggressive treatments in the final month accounting for 80 percent of those costs.

"This is a waste of money ... The real cost differences could be substantial," said Holly Prigerson of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at Harvard, who helped perform the study. "We're not saying these conversations are easy," she said, suggesting physicians ill-equipped for the job pass it on to those that are, such as palliative care specialists. "Patients aren't significantly more distressed after these conversations. Letting false hope persist is not really helpful."

Another study published in the journal by Boston University researchers found that black and Hispanic Medicare patients incurred higher costs than whites in their final six months. The intensive end-of-life treatments provided to minorities reverses the lifetime pattern where they received less medical care than whites, according to the report.

Researcher Amresh Hanchate and colleagues speculated that lack of familiarity or distrust of the medical system, as well as religious beliefs, could help account for the gap.

A third study showed patients fear their doctors abandon them as death approaches.

"Physicians are aware of this fear and attempt to address it with reassurance or continuity strategies. Yet, as death approaches, some patients and families may feel abandoned nonetheless," wrote Dr. Anthony Back of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington, Seattle.

Source: <http://www.reutershealth.com/>

Daytime Sleepiness Predicts Death in the Elderly

Excessive daytime sleepiness is an independent risk factor for cardiovascular-related mortality as well as mortality from other causes in elderly individuals, French researchers report.

"Complaints of excessive daytime sleepiness are very frequent in the elderly, but there have been few studies relating daytime sleepiness and mortality in the elderly and those results were mixed," lead investigator Dr. Jean-Philippe Empana, from Hopital Paul Brousse, Villejuif, said in a statement.

To this end, the investigators conducted a population-based study in France, called the Three City Study, which included 9,294 subjects, 65 years of age or older, who were recruited between 1999 and 2001. At enrollment, 8,269 of the subjects completed questionnaires regarding excessive daytime sleepiness, sleep complaints, and medication use for anxiety or sleep.

Overall, 18.7 percent of subjects reported feeling sleepy on a regular basis or frequently during the day, the researchers note in their study, soon to be published in the journal *Stroke*.

During 6 years of follow-up, 762 subjects died, including 196 from cardiovascular disease and 260 from cancer. After adjusting for age, gender, body mass index, previous cardiovascular disease, and other possible contributing factors, excessive daytime sleepiness increased the risk of death by 33 percent.

Accounting for sleep medication use and for depressive symptoms only slightly weakened the association between excessive daytime sleepiness and mortality. Moreover, excessive daytime sleepiness could not be predicted by loud snoring.

Further analysis showed that excessive daytime sleepiness increased the odds of cardiovascular mortality by 49 percent, but had no statistically significant effect on the risk of death due to cancer (12 percent).

"These data may have clinical implications adding to the body of evidence that excessive daytime sleepiness is not a benign but rather an important risk marker of death in community-dwelling elderly," Empana said.

Source: *Stroke*, April 2009.



UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY

CAMPUS EVENTS:

Work-Life Spring Lunch & Learn Series:

What Work-Life Can Do For You May 12th Scovell Hall, Rm. 220
Navigating the Maze of Elder Care Resources May 14th Scovell Hall, Rm. 220
No Stress Summer Study Activities May 19th Scovell Hall, Rm. 220
All sessions are from 12:10-12:50 p.m.

- ***Health & Wellness Events: 2009 Health and Wellness Retreat May 8th from 8 am – 4:30 p.m. at Embassy Suites.*** For more information and to RSVP for appointments and programs, please visit www.uky.edu/HR/wellness
- ***Caregivers Support Group (CARE Group):*** UK employee caregivers will meet May 14th from 12 – 1:00 in Room 322 CTW Building. Anyone is welcome! For more information, call Janice Austin at 323-4600.
- ***Challenges of Aging Conference*** scheduled May 21st from 8:30 – 2:30 p.m. at the UK Student Center. Cost is \$12.00 and this includes lunch. This is a one-day program of educational workshops providing up-to-date information for maintaining an active and independent lifestyle and is intended for older adults and caregivers. For more information, call 323-4600 or call 266-5283 to register.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- ***Generations Film Festival*** sponsored by Bluegrass Area Agency on Aging will be held each Tuesday evening in May at 6 p.m. at the downtown library. First session is Tuesday May 5th and topic is *Lessons of Living*. The other 3 films will be shown on the following Tuesday evenings and in order are: The Open Road: America Looks At Aging, narrated by Walter Cronkite and will show on May 12th, Do Not Go Gently, about the life story of 4 very Senior Seniors who are still active in their artistic abilities and will be on May 19th, and finally Racing Against The Clock on the 26th, a film about Senior athletes who compete in the National Senior Olympics. Each of these will be preceded by a reception and art exhibit and followed by a panel discussion and question/answer series. For more information, call 269-8021.
- ***Lexington Senior Center Older Americans Month Events:***
 - *May 5 – 8, 2009 *Book Sale* sponsored by Price Right Books
 - * May 6, 2009 *Feldenkrais Class* at 11 a.m.
 - *May 12, 2009 *Variety Show and Reception* at 12:30 p.m.
 - *May 13, 2009 *Mature Drivers Program* at 10:30 a.m.
 - * May 14, 2009 *OptiMed Pharmacist Presentation & Consultation* at 9:30 a.m.
 - *May 21, 2009 *Meeting the Challenges of Aging* held at the UK Student Center. Registration and forms will be available at the Lexington Senior Center or by calling 266-5283. Free transportation will be available from the Senior Center beginning at 8 a.m., but need to sign up at the front desk.

These events are held at the Senior Center at 1530 Nicholasville Road. Sign up sheets are available and it is suggested you RSVP. For more information, call 278-6072 or stop by the Senior Center and pick-up an events calendar.

- ***FREE COMMUNITY HEALTH SCREENINGS*** sponsored by AARP and Walgreens. Dates and Locations are as follows for Lexington area:
 - *May 7, 2009 Noon - 6 PM Walgreens 101 E Reynolds Rd.
 - *May 8, 2009 Noon - 6 PM Walgreens 260 New Circle Rd NE
 - *May 9, 2009 Noon - 6 PM Mayfest Arts Fair 250 W Third St
 - *May 10, 2009 Noon - 6 PM Mayfest Arts Fair 250 W Third

FOR OUTSIDE OF FAYETTE COUNTY SCREENINGS

Visit www.aarpwalgreens.com/tour or call 1-866-484-TOUR.

- ***Emotional Aspects of Aging: Bridging the Generation Gap*** May 9, 10 a.m. – noon at Southern Hills United Methodist Church on Harrodsburg Road. Ester Hulbert, a care manager with 30 years experience in nursing and elder care will

offer practical guidance for older adults and their family members as they navigate the physical and emotional dynamics of the aging process. Event sponsored by Lexington Family Magazine as part of their Successful Aging seminar series. For more information, call 223-1765 www.Lexingtonfamily.com



CAREGIVER SURVIVAL GUIDE

Older Americans Month 2009 Living Today for a Better Tomorrow

May is Older Americans Month, a great time to bring attention to the issues that affect older adults and create community-wide opportunities to help older Americans improve their quality of life. This year's theme is "Living Today For a Better Tomorrow," and we, as a nation, must work together to give older adults the tools they need to make healthy decisions. By 2030, one in every five Americans will be age 65 or older. Although the risk of disease increases with advancing age, poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. Many illnesses, disabilities and even death associated with chronic disease are preventable.

Nearly 40% of deaths in America can be attributed to poor health habits such as lack of physical exercise, poor eating habits and smoking. Older Americans can prevent or control chronic disease by adopting healthy habits such as exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy diet and ceasing tobacco use.

The benefits of regular physical activity include weight control; healthy bones, muscles and joints; arthritis relief; reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression; and more. Exercise does not have to be strenuous and is safe for people of all age groups. In fact, it's healthier to exercise than eliminate it altogether. Older Americans can greatly benefit from a regular exercise routine that includes strength, balance, stretching and endurance exercises.

In addition to a regular exercise routine, good nutrition is vital in maintaining good health. Improving older Americans' diets can reduce the occurrence of chronic diseases, but most older adults over age 65 do not maintain a healthy diet. Reducing saturated fats and eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, and grains can help out older Americans on the right track to staying healthy.

Tobacco use increases the risk of heart disease and cancer and is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. Older adults who stop smoking will gain immediate and long-term health benefits. While it's important for older Americans to have good physical health, it's equally important that they maintain good mental health. Nearly 20 percent of Americans age 55 and older experience depression and

anxiety disorders.

Studies have shown that engaging in social activities within the community can greatly improve mental health. In fact, research has demonstrated a strong relationship between volunteering and mental health and that volunteering provides older adults with greater benefits than younger volunteers. Benefits include improved mental and physical health, greater life satisfaction, lower rates of depression and lower mortality rates.

The U.S. Administration on Aging and its National Aging Services Network support a number of successful programs throughout the country that are helping older adults live better today and in the future. These programs keep people independent and out of nursing homes through streamlined access to health and long term care information and options and provide home and community-based systems of services that include the support for family caregivers. These programs also encourage older people to remain active and make behavioral changes through the increased use of evidence-based disease prevention programs under the Older Americans Act as well as the use of preventive benefits available under Medicare.

Americans of all ages and backgrounds can celebrate Older Americans Month. Contact your local Agency on Aging and volunteer for activities in your area; promote community, state, and national efforts to serve older adults; and find ways to enrich the lives of older adults who touch your life. Additionally, actively search out ways you can involve your community's older adults in volunteer efforts, allowing them to share their wisdom and energy. By working together, we can improve the health and well being of our Nation's older adults and pave the way for better health as we age.

Source: www.aoa.gov



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