

UK Elder Care
IN THE KNOW
E-Newsletter
October 2008



A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

I want to encourage employees to participate in this year's National Work and Family Month celebration. Work-Life in collaboration with other departments across campus has planned a number of FREE presentations and events around *Generations@Work*. Thanks to support from AARP Kentucky, the month will kick-off with a luncheon with guest speaker Dr. Linda Gravett on ***Generations at Work: Why Can't We Just Get Along?!*** Dr. Gravett is co-author of *Bridging the Generation Gap: How to get Radio Babies, Boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers to Work Together and Get Results*. She will engage a panel of UK employee's representing each generation in a discussion of how the generation from which they come influences the way they function at work. You don't want to miss this event, which is scheduled October 1, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Student Center. Seating is limited! There are many more special events, including Work-Life's first annual Work-Life Supervisor of the Year award where we will recognize the first UK supervisor to earn this distinction! For more information, please visit the Work-Life web site at www.uky.edu/HR/worklife. For those of you taking care of older adults, we have a number of Elder Care events planned in November for National Caregivers month, so visit Elder Care's web site for a listing of scheduled events in November www.uky.edu/HR/eldercare!



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Study Finds "Elderspeak" Increases Resistance to Care in Residents with Dementia

According to new research reported at the 2008 Alzheimer's Association International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease, adults with Alzheimer's in nursing homes who are talked to like children are more resistant to care. Researchers at the University of Kansas School of Nursing explored the relationships between how nursing home staff communicate with residents with dementia and resistance to care. The study specifically looked at "elderspeak," defined as overly caring, controlling, and infantilizing communication, similar to "baby" talk. Common features are simplified grammar

and vocabulary, substitution of collective pronouns, and overly intimate endearments. The study found that residents who were talked down to were twice as likely to resist care than those who were spoken to as adults. Researchers speculate that as residents with dementia lose their cognitive abilities, they struggle to maintain some semblance of personal identity. When spoken to in "elderspeak," they may feel they are not getting the respect they deserve but are unable to communicate their distress, so they do so by resisting care.

Source: International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease press release, July 28, 2008; <http://www.emaxhealth.com/91/23486.html>; McKnight's Long- Term Care News & Assisted Living, July 29, 2008

Alzheimer's Biomarker Could Give People Advance Warning of Disease, Allowing For Earlier Intervention

A simple blood test to detect whether a person might develop Alzheimer's disease is within sight and could eventually help scientists in their quest toward reversing the disease's onset in those likely to develop the debilitating neurological condition.

Building on a study that started 20 years ago with an elderly population in Northern Manhattan at risk or in various stages of developing Alzheimer's disease, the Columbia research group has yielded ground-breaking findings that could change the way the disease is treated or someday prevent it. These findings suggest that by looking at the blood doctors may be able to detect a person's predisposition to developing the dementia-inducing disease that robs a person of their memory and ability carry out tasks essential to life.

Results presented online in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* during the week of Sept. 8, 2008 suggest that individuals with elevated levels of a certain peptide in the blood plasma, Amyloid Beta 42 (A β 42), are at increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and that the decline of A β 42 in the bloodstream may reflect the compartmentalization or "traffic jam" of A β 42 in the brain, which occurs in the brain's of people with Alzheimer's.

While the cognitive impairments of Alzheimer's can be monitored throughout the disease course, clinicians have had no reliable way to monitor the pathologic progression of the disease. Being able to reliably measure A β levels in the blood could provide clinicians with a tool that forecasts the onset of Alzheimer's much earlier. Earlier detection would of course be an important step in combating the disease, researchers said.

For the full report: www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/120866.php

Nursing Home Prescribing Remains a Cause for Concern

Research launched at the British Pharmaceutical Conference (BPC) in Manchester has shown that 51% of nursing home patients are taking inappropriate psychoactive drugs. A separate study at BPC describes how inappropriate prescribing of psychoactive drugs may be influenced by organizational and/or treatment culture.

Historically, psychotropic medications have been used in nursing homes to sedate the residents, when there is no clinical need. Two pharmacy studies in Northern Ireland have focused on these drugs.

Researchers investigated the effect of implementing an adapted US model of pharmaceutical care, "The Fleetwood Northern Ireland (NI) model", to evaluate its effect on the number of residents who received inappropriate psychoactive medication and the number who had a fall.

While application of the Fleetwood NI Model led to a 74% decrease in the number of residents who received inappropriate psychoactive medications in intervention homes, there was no effect on the number of residents who experienced a fall. This may be attributed to the fact that falls are influenced by multiple factors.

In the second study, staff from two nursing homes were interviewed about prescribing and how it might be influenced by organizational culture. The latter has been defined by some experts as 'the way we do things around here'. They perceived that psychoactive drugs might be prescribed during times of staff shortages, and could be seen as a way of keeping the residents calm and "to make life easier" in some homes.

For the full report: www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/120740.php



UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY

- **Decorator's Showcase 2008 at Shady Side to benefit the Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass** is September 27-October 12. Cost is \$15. For more information and a schedule of the times, call 277-0870 or visit www.ombuddy.org.
- **CARE Group *New Locations!*** October 9th Room 322, CTW Building; and October 16th in Peterson Service Building, Room 379. All meetings are from Noon – 1 p.m.
- **Writing for Caregivers with Jeff Worley** is Saturdays, October 4, 11, 18, and 25 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 pm. At the Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning. Reading reception November 7th 6:30 p.m. This is a workshop focused on putting thoughts and feelings on paper to regain perspective and control over challenging and life changing events. There is a \$10 materials fee. Registration required.

UK Work and Family Month Events! Visit the Work-Life web site at www.uky.edu/HR/worklife for a complete schedule, and to register for the Kick-Off Luncheon Generations @ Work sponsored by AARP Kentucky. Seating is limited, so register early!



CAREGIVER SURVIVAL GUIDE

Caring For an Elder from Far Away: Geriatric Care Managers

As an adult, balancing work and elder care can be a challenge whether your parent lives next door or out of state. Add children to this, and the situation becomes compounded. Legal, financial and long-term planning for elder care is crucial, and long distance caregivers need to prepare for travel and time off from work. Face the facts, most older adults want to stay right where they are. They do not want to relocate, even if it means being closer to family. If this is what the elder wishes, as the child, you must respect their wishes.

For people who work and care for an aged family member, (particularly when that family member lives far away), one solution is to hire a professional geriatric care manager. A geriatric care manager is a professional who specializes in assisting older people and their families with long-term care arrangements. Care managers have a minimum of a bachelor's degree or substantial equivalent training in gerontology, social work, nursing, counseling, psychology or a related field.

Prolonged illness, disability or simply the challenges of aging can significantly alter the lifestyle of older adults. Daily responsibilities can become difficult. Efficient coordination of medical, personal and social service resources can enhance the quality of life for older adults and their caregivers.

Geriatric care managers assist older adults in maintaining their independence at home and can ease the transition to a new setting, if needed. Geriatric care managers also help:

- Conduct care planning assessments to identify problems, eligibility for assistance, and need for services.
- Review financial, legal, or medical issues and offer referrals to geriatric specialists to avoid future problems and conserve assets.

- Act as a liaison to families at a distance, making sure things are going well and alerting families to problems.
- Assist with moving an older person to or from a retirement complex, assisted living facility, or nursing home.
- Offer counseling and support.
- How do you know when it is time to call a professional? Look for these signs.
- Is your loved one losing weight for no known reason? Do they fall?
- Is the home unkempt and becoming unsafe? How are meals made? Who pays the bills?
- Are they able to (and do they) maintain a neat appearance? Has drinking become a problem?
- Is it safe for your parents to drive? If not, who does the driving for them?
- Has there been a sudden memory loss or increased confusion?

Of course in order to answer these questions, you'll have to pay a visit to your long distance loved one, or rely on information from a relative or friend who is close to that loved one. There is no reason to feel guilty about being far away as long as you are doing everything that you can to help.

Source: Caregiver.com Weekly Newsletter, Thursday September 11, 2008 - Issue #397

**If you are a long-distance caregiver and need help navigating resources out of state such as a geriatric care management services ,
Call UK Elder Care at 323-4600!**



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