San Diego Workshop to Kick Off Three-Year NIA Grant

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) has awarded GSA a three year cooperative conference grant focused on aging, the central nervous system (CNS), and mobility in older adults. Its first component will be a workshop taking place in the days prior to the start of GSA’s Annual Scientific Meeting in San Diego in November.

The primary purpose of this grant-funded project is to highlight the emerging field examining the interplay between the CNS and mobility impairment in community-dwelling older adults. The conference series is expected to foster the exchange of research findings and new ideas — as well as address related methodological issues and research barriers — in order to identify the role of the CNS in mobility loss.

The principal investigators on this grant are GSA members Caterina Rosano, MD, MPH, and Stephanie A. Studenski, MD, MPH, and GSA Deputy Executive Director Linda Harootyan, MSW. “Our long-term goal is to facilitate the translation of research results into interventions that improve mobility for older adults,” said Harootyan. “To accomplish this, we’re convening a series of three workshops that will have a distinct but interrelated scientific focus.”

Participants in San Diego will establish the best evidence to date for a relationship between the CNS and mobility and will identify state-of-the-art technology to quantify CNS and mobility measures.

The second workshop, taking place at GSA’s 2013 Annual Scientific Meeting in New Orleans, will focus on the CNS in mobility loss.

Act Now for San Diego Hotel Discounts

GSA Annual Scientific Meeting attendees have until October 19 to secure reduced room rates at the San Diego Marriott Marquis & Marina, Hilton San Diego Gaslamp Quarter, and Omni San Diego Hotel. These three properties are a short walk to the San Diego Convention Center, where the majority of sessions will take place. While you may have a variety of choices when arranging accommodations for the meeting, GSA has made a major commitment to the conference hotels in order to secure the space necessary to hold the scientific sessions. Please select from one of these official hotels when planning your accommodations. Take advantage of the discounted pricing at www.geron.org/annualmeeting.

GSA’s strength lies with YOU.

Your knowledge, your experience, and your contributions make you a valued professional in the field of aging. Share this strength with others and be rewarded in return. When you refer a colleague to join GSA during September’s Membership Month, you’ll receive a $25 Amazon.com gift card! Visit geron.org/membership for more details, including tips on how to recruit new members.

Ageism Presents Dilemmas for Policymakers Worldwide

The negative consequences of age discrimination in many countries are more widespread than discrimination due to race or gender, yet differential treatment based on a person’s age is often seen as more acceptable and even desirable, according to the newest edition of the Public Policy & Aging Report (PP&AR). This publication, which features cross-national perspectives, was jointly produced by GSA and AGE UK.

The PP&AR explores how discriminatory behaviors manifest themselves, steps that are being taken to address those behaviors, and the challenges associated with asserting elders’ individual rights while acknowledging vulnerabilities that are inevitably — although variably — associated with advanced chronological age.

Five separate articles illuminate the issues and options that face policymakers as they seek to eliminate negative discriminatory behaviors. Yet, the authors wrestle as well with how to identify and preserve age-biased provisions and practices that bring legitimate and needed benefits to older people. In particular, they ask if age discrimination is ever acceptable and whom might such discrimination advantage.

“We find that age-based discrimination raises a series of unique dilemmas for policymaking and service delivery,” said GSA Executive Director James Appleby, RPh, MPH. “We’re proud to partner with AGE UK to bring together the top minds from United States and the United Kingdom to address them.”

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GA Expands Its International Collaborations

By James Appleby, RPh, MPH
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Last month’s Gerontology News reported on the globally focused post-conference workshop we’ll conduct at the end of November’s Annual Scientific Meeting in San Diego. Framed through the lens of Latin America, this event will explore the possibilities for transnational collaboration in research and education. Representatives from the Pan American Health Organization will be among our speakers. (See www.geron.org/postcon for additional details.)

In addition to convening top experts from around the world here in the U.S., we’re working abroad to build new relationships with the global research community, too. These activities deal with nearly every aspect of gerontology — from policy matters to the social sciences to medicine — thus demonstrating the strength of GSA’s interdisciplinary makeup. It’s hard to imagine another aging-focused organization with a membership base that could adequately address such a broad range of subjects.

On this month’s front page you read about the latest Public Policy & Aging Report. This installment is the result of a partnership between GSA and Age UK, which is a social enterprise and a charity working on behalf of Britain’s senior population. The authors tackle the complex issues surrounding age discrimination, and Age UK will be making the publication available electronically to its constituents.

By the time you read this, I’ll be headed back from the Chinese Congress on Gerontology and Health Industry, a meeting GSA co-sponsored in Beijing from August 31 to September 2. It was organized by the Chinese Geriatrics Society and I was joined by a GSA member delegation consisting of President-Elect Laurence Z. Rubenstein, MD, MPH, FACP (who delivered one of the meeting’s keynote addresses), Stephen B. Kritchevsky, PhD, Richard H. Fortinsky, PhD, and Lazelle E. Benefield, PhD, RN, FAAN. In exchange, the Chinese Geriatrics Society will be sending a delegation to GSA’s San Diego meeting. This was the second conference we co-sponsored in China in 2012. We’ve focused a lot of attention on that country in the past two years as part of GSA’s China Initiative, which seeks to foster the development of strong linkages between gerontologists in the U.S. and China. And as we’ve reported in previous issues of Gerontology News, the first participant in GSA’s Visiting Scholar Program, Ning Jackie Zhang, MD, PhD, MPH, chose to dedicate his term of service to the China Initiative.

Jackie’s one-year tenure has now concluded, but his productive work has paved the way for many future collaborations. For example, he established a working relationship with the Chinese Medical Tribune to publish a gerontology-focused column; aided in the planning of GSA’s presence at three Chinese gerontology conferences, recruited and engaged new GSA members from China, including the development of a mentorship program; and expanded the work of the Chinese Gerontology Interest Group.

Looking ahead, GSA Deputy Director Linda Harootyan, MSW, will be traveling to Turkey’s Akdeniz University in early November as the Society’s invited representative at the International Psycho-Social and Applied Gerontology Symposium. A number of prominent GSA members also are on the conference program there.

Most of the activities listed above were spurred by the work or suggestions of GSA’s members, so I invite readers to share any potential global partnerships that would benefit GSA. Furthermore, if you are interested in joining the Visiting Scholar Program, please let me know! Your work would not be required to have an international focus. Visit www.geron.org/visiting scholar to learn more. I can be reached at jappleby@geron.org.
New Publications by Members


Members in the News

• Anne D. Basting, PhD, appeared in an NPR broadcast on May 14 discussing the program she founded called TimeSlips. She spoke about storytelling among people with Alzheimer’s disease and how it can be therapeutic for those suffering from dementia. An article that she co-authored, which was published in The Gerontologist, found that storytelling made people more engaged and alert, and that workers at residential facilities had positive views of their patients.

• Michael Maddens, MD, was quoted in the Detroit Free Press and USA Today on June 6 in an article about brain function and mental exercises. He mentioned the need to keep the brain agile and active.

• Kate de Medeiros, PhD, was quoted in an article about older drivers struggling to make left turns in The Middletown Journal on June 6.

Member Spotlight

GSA’s website features monthly Q&A sessions with distinguished members. The current spotlight shines on:

Elizabeth A. Hahn, PhD
(a member of GSA’s Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization)
Visit www.geron.org/Membership/member-spotlight to ask questions and read previous interviews.

Colleague Connection

This month’s $25 amazon.com gift certificate winner: Nathan Kogan, PhD
The recipient, who became eligible after referring new member Sean Halpin, MA, was randomly selected using randomizer.org.
For more details on the Colleague Connection promotion, which includes a chance to win free lodging at the annual meeting, visit www.geron.org/connection.

Cook Speaks at China Conference

Former GSA President Fay Lomax Cook, PhD, was one of two keynote speakers at the Aging & Social Security International Conference held in Hangzhou, China, in May, which GSA co-sponsored. Her talk was titled “Social Security in America: Opportunities, Challenges and Public Support.” She also gave a lecture on social policy at Zhejiang University during the trip. Cook currently is the director of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University, where she also serves as a professor in the human development and social policy doctoral program. Her research focuses on the interrelationships between public opinion and public policy, the politics of public policy, how Americans come together to discuss policy issues, and the dynamics of public support for Social Security and other social programs.

Sullivan-Marx Named Dean of NYU’s College of Nursing

Eileen M. Sullivan-Marx PhD, CRNP, RN, FAAN, assumed the deanship of New York University’s College of Nursing on July 1. She was previously a professor of scholarly practice and associate dean for practice and community affairs at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, where she held the Shearer Endowed Term Chair in Healthy Community Practice. Sullivan-Marx has won numerous national and international awards and honors, including the Marie Hippensteel Lingeman Award for Excellence in Nursing Practice from the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society.

Levine’s Webinar Discusses Medicine, Art

On July 19, GSA Fellow Jeffrey M. Levine, MD, hosted “Explorations in Medicine & Art,” a webinar sponsored by the Society for the Arts in Healthcare and the National Endowment for the Arts. The archived webinar is available at www.thesah.org/events/event_detail.cfm?id=840. For more info on the traveling exhibit, contact Levine at jlevinemd@shcny.com.

Glass Earns Georgia Council on Aging Seat

The Commissioner for the Georgia Department of Human Services has appointed Anne P. Glass, PhD, to a two-year term as a member of the Georgia Council on Aging. In this position, Glass will advise the governor, the Georgia General Assembly, and other state agencies on aging-related issues. Currently, Glass is an associate professor at the University of Georgia’s College of Public Health, and associate director and graduate coordinator of the university’s Institute of Gerontology. Her research has focused on formal and informal care of older adults, end of life and long-term care, and social support among neighbors.
New AARP Venture Amplifies Millions’ Opinions on Medicare, Social Security

President Bill Clinton often said that we should trust the intelligence of the American people. AARP has taken that notion to heart with its current You’ve Earned a Say (YEAS) initiative. As Congress flails about trying to reduce the deficit, make tax policy, reform social programs, and run for re-election, AARP has undertaken a project to find out how everyday Americans, who reflect a broad range of viewpoints, think we could strengthen Social Security and Medicare. What a novel idea — ask real people what makes sense to them, what is fair, what they need, and how they will deal with change.

This may not be the kind of research and data published in a peer-reviewed journal, but you can decide whether this is valuable information about what people think. It very well may provide insights for us as we move forward toward reforms that are necessary to keep these programs strong for current and future generations. Additionally, since AARP will be at the table in Washington, DC, working toward a politically feasible solution, the organization does need to have a sense of what its members and constituency expect of it and what is simply not an acceptable deal or representation of their viewpoints.

You’ve Earned a Say

“After years of paying into Medicare and Social Security, you’ve earned a say in their future… AARP believes you’ve earned your benefits and the peace of mind that comes with knowing that Medicare and Social Security are strong today and will be in the future. That’s why we’ve launched You’ve Earned a Say — a national conversation to ensure that before any decisions are made in Washington that could affect you and your family, you have a voice in the debate.”

Thus states the mission on AARP’s new website, www.earnedasay.org. The goals of the YEAS program are to seek input and perspectives from anyone who is interested in Social Security and Medicare. The initiative is not exclusive to AARP members. In addition, AARP wants to provide current and unbiased information about the policy options being proposed to change/improve these critical programs. Finally, AARP provides an easy avenue for advocacy and feedback to policy makers and to its own organization.

The website has several elements, foremost of which is the questionnaire that visitors can answer. The first component contains six questions about the viability of Social Security and Medicare and how individuals feel about the programs; the second goes more in-depth about how to approach the challenges facing the future of Medicare and Social Security. The website also features TV spots, infographics, live chats with experts like the AARP Policy Director David Certner, and information about policy options that Congress may consider, with pros and cons written by academic experts in the field.

Information: Pro vs. Con

Another goal of the YEAS program is to provide information to people who want to dig deeper into the issues. The YEAS program has developed five brochures that can be downloaded from the website on the background of the Social Security and Medicare programs and the challenges that are facing them now:

• Medicare and Social Security: What’s at Stake
• Medicare: Get the Facts
• Medicare: Keeping It Strong
• Social Security: Get the Facts
• Social Security: Keeping It Strong

Also on the YEAS website are short summaries of more than 25 proposals on Medicare and Social Security currently being considered in Washington, DC. Each summary is accompanied by pro and con opinions by experts who typically represent differing sides of the issues. For proposals in which the experts did not have different views, AARP commissioned policy analysts from Avalere Health, a leading health care consulting firm, to analyze the options.

The website provides links to longer papers on the topics to allow people who want more information to be able to access policy analysis easily.

As Matheis points out, “We respect people’s opinions. We know that they want information. They don’t want us to decide for them, they want a source of unbiased information. This is not AARP talking, these are the experts talking. That’s the point of working with respected academics on the left and the right and letting them describe their own organization.

Before YEAS launched, AARP conducted a poll among potential participants, which asked people whether they wanted to be involved in the discussion about the future of Social Security and Medicare. The results showed that 46 percent said yes, they wanted their voices to be heard; 7 percent said that they were not interested in being involved; and another 46 percent said yes, but were afraid that “it won’t make any difference.” People overwhelmingly want to make their views known.

I spoke with AARP’s Cheryl Matheis about the YEAS initiative. She is the senior vice president in AARP’s Policy Strategy & International Affairs Group and she directs the effort to engage opinion leaders in YEAS.

At this point, 2.5 million people have completed the two questionnaires. They are not meant to be strict scientific surveys, however.

“We know that it’s a self-selected sample whenever you put something in a magazine or website. Given how many people have become engaged and have given us feedback, it is valuable feedback even if it isn’t statistically significant research,” Matheis said.
in their own words their best argument for a certain option — they write their pros and they write their cons.”

The following are examples from the YEAS website of the pro and con summaries for one of the options facing Medicare, raising the eligibility age.

Since Medicare’s creation in 1965, the eligibility age has been 65 for people without disabilities. Some proposals would gradually raise Medicare’s eligibility age from 65 to 67. So instead of receiving health coverage through Medicare, 65- and 66-year-olds would need to enroll in coverage through an employer plan or a government program (such as Medicaid) or purchase their own coverage on the individual market or through a health insurance exchange.

**PRO:** Raising the Medicare eligibility age is a good idea. Both Medicare and Social Security were intended for retired Americans. So it would make sense to set the normal eligibility age of each program at the age where we have decided as a nation that retirement typically begins. We could do so by increasing the eligibility age slowly over 10 or 15 years to at least 67 — the Social Security normal retirement age — and by allowing the eligibility age of both programs to rise gradually after that as Americans live longer. This would reduce Medicare’s costs by about 5 percent over the next 20 years. Not a magic bullet, but one important step to solving the Medicare cost problem. (Stuart Butler, Heritage Foundation)

**CON:** Raising the age of eligibility for Medicare at this time would be a bad idea. It would save the federal government little money, raise total health care spending, impose significant financial burdens on many financially vulnerable seniors, and impose new costs on businesses and state governments. Having to wait until age 65 for Medicare coverage is a serious problem even now. Raising the age of eligibility for Medicare makes the wait longer and the problem worse. Now is not the time to put at risk the health insurance coverage for millions of 65- and 66-year-olds in the mistaken belief that doing so will contribute significantly to lowering the federal deficit. (Henry J. Aaron, Brookings Institution)

(By the way, the experts for the Social Security pro and con summaries are David John of the Heritage Foundation and Virginia Reno of the National Academy of Social Insurance.)

**Feedback**

The information from the questionnaires, the wall posts, and videos on the website is being collected not just for members of Congress and presidential candidates, but also for the individuals who visit the website and read AARP’s Bulletin.

“We are sharing the comments and answers and questions that have come from all of these Americans. Some, but not all, are AARP members, and most are probably over age 50. These folks are engaging in a national conversation about the programs that have made a huge difference in our lives and the lives of our loved ones since 1965,” Matheis points out. The YEAS questionnaires will be broken out by state “because people want to know what other people in their state think,” says Matheis. Again, it does not meet rigorous statistical standards, but it is still intriguing information.

The information from YEAS will be used to generate further questionnaires throughout the year. The questionnaires will become more specific about the issues that are most important to the national conversants.

**Advocacy**

The website allows you to send your thoughts about Social Security and Medicare in an e-mail letter format directly to your members of Congress. Matheis was quick to point out that the way the program is set up, the voices are not AARP’s, they are the comments of the people who answer the questionnaires. “We are not asking them to direct AARP’s voice, we are creating avenues for them to express their own voices directly to a member of congress or a candidate,” she said.

**Election Year Education**

The YEAS conversation will also involve the presidential and congressional candidates. The website suggests that these three questions should be answered by the candidates before any votes are cast on November 6:

1. How would you protect Social Security for today’s seniors and strengthen it for future generations?
2. How would you put Medicare on stronger financial ground and protect today’s seniors and future retirees from the burden of rising health costs?
3. How would you help Americans build a financial nest egg for their retirement?

“With the information provided by YEAS, voters can be knowledgeable about the problems and solutions facing Social Security and Medicare,” said Matheis, adding that AARP, too, can benefit from knowing what voters think.

“Later on, when there is an actual legislative proposal regarding Social Security or Medicare, we will take the input we have gotten from You’ve Earned a Say, as well as from respected researchers and experts. Our all volunteer Board of Directors will look at our values and our principles,” Matheis continued. “Then they will make policy decisions based on all of this information.”

GSA members may find it interesting to go to the YEAS website and fill out the two questionnaires. They are thought-provoking because there are no easy answers about the challenges facing Medicare and Social Security. Many of the options being proposed to shore up these programs have merit and viability. As leaders in aging research, education, and policy, you seek to understand problems and possible solutions and it may be enlightening to see what millions of Americans are thinking about these issues. Our success or failure may turn on the understanding of the very constituency that we study and serve.
NIA Promotes Kidney Studies

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) has issued a R21 Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award funding opportunity announcement that invites applications that propose basic, clinical, and translational research on chronic kidney disease (CKD) and its consequences in aging and in older persons. Applications should focus on the biology and pathophysiology of CKD in animal models; etiology and pathophysiology of CKD in older adults; epidemiology and risk factors for the development of CKD with advancing age; and/or diagnosis, medical management, and clinical outcomes of CKD in this population. Research supported by this initiative should enhance knowledge of CKD and its consequences in older adults and provide evidence-based guidance in the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of CKD in older persons. The earliest submission date is September 16. Additional details may be found at grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-12-210.html.

Outstanding Junior Researcers Eligible for NIH Early Independence Awards

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Common Fund has announced the 2013 funding opportunity for the NIH Director’s Early Independence Awards (EIA). The EIA initiative supports junior scientists who would like to pursue research directly to accelerate their transition to an independent research career by skipping traditional postdoctoral training. To be eligible, candidates must be within one year (before or after) of completion of their terminal degree or clinical residency at the time of application. Each institution may submit up to only two applications in response to this funding opportunity. Awards will be made for up to $250,000 in direct costs per year, plus applicable facilities and administrative costs. Letters of intent are due December 30; applications are due January 30, 2013. Additional information can be found at grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-12-018.html.

GEMSSTAR Welcomes Applications from Early-Stage Physicians

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) is now welcoming applications for the 2013 round of its Grants for Early Medical/Surgical Specialists’ Transition to Aging Research (GEMSSTAR) program, which provides research grant support to early-stage physicians seeking to bridge their clinical specialty with aging research. This program particularly targets clinician-scientists who have recently completed their residency or fellowship training and are beginning their first faculty position. It is intended to help those trained in medical or surgical specialties to establish a research track record in aging-related aspects of their specialty. The award will provide an opportunity to gain skills and experience in aging research and help investigators establish an independent program of research in their clinical field relevant to geriatric or gerontological science. Applications are due October 1. See grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-13-006.html for detailed information.

HRSA’s Service Area Competition Awards Offer Funds for Health Centers

The Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is soliciting applications for its Health Center Program’s Service Area Competition (SAC). Health centers improve the health of underserved communities and vulnerable populations by providing access to comprehensive, culturally competent, and quality health care services. SAC eligibility requirements, review criteria, and awarding factors for organizations can be found at the HRSA Open Opportunities webpage at www.hrsa.gov/grants/index.html. Several funding opportunities, with varying deadline dates, are available.

AHRQ Grants Bolster Research on Healthcare-Associated Infections

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is soliciting grant applications for funding to conduct large research projects focused on detection, prevention, reduction, and effective management of healthcare-associated infections. The total amount awarded and the number of awards will depend upon the number, quality, duration, and costs of the applications received. The total costs for a grant awarded will not exceed $500,000 annually for the entire project period, which may not exceed five years. Funding beyond the first year will be contingent upon a review and acceptance by agency staff. Applications may be submitted from September 5, 2012, to November 5, 2015. Additional information may be obtained at grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-12-241.html.

Continued from page 1 - San Diego Workshop to Kick Off Three-Year
will build on the first and ascertain the mechanisms and causes by which age-related CNS impairment may cause mobility impairment. The final session in the series, slated for the 2014 meeting in Washington, DC, will identify the most promising prevention and intervention strategies that are currently being studied and/or should be addressed in future studies.

Each event will bring together experts from interrelated disciplines in basic science and animal models, epidemiology, and clinical research. “Subsequently, we plan to disseminate our findings, discussions, and recommendations to investigators, clinicians, and the public through symposia at the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting — as well as submit coordinated individual papers to a variety of related journals for publication,” said Rosano.

The San Diego workshop, “Evidence on Changes in the Central Nervous System Control of Movement Across the Life Span and in Aging,” will begin on the evening of Monday, November 12 and conclude at noon on Wednesday, November 14. Interested attendees can sign up using the main Annual Scientific Meeting registration form; there is a $175 charge to attend. The full agenda is online at www.geron.org/cns.
Choosing a dissertation or thesis topic is one of the most important tasks in your graduate studies. Even though it may seem overwhelming as you start the process, writing a dissertation or thesis is not only a requirement for the completion of your degree, but it also can serve as a strong foundation for your professional career and life as a scholar. In this month's column, we have provided some helpful tips for selecting a focus for your research.

1. Select a topic you think you will like forever.
   Once you choose your topic, you will spend a lot of time with it! You will think of it when you eat, watch television, and even while you sleep. Furthermore, you will probably explain your topic and results to people over and over. If you don’t like your topic, it will become tedious for you rather than being an opportunity to show your passion and commitment to your research and your career. Yes, you will feel like you are “married” to your dissertation.

2. Think about what hasn’t been done.
   As you start your graduate studies, you will learn about theories, research methods, and research projects in your particular area of interest. You may very well find trends and figure out gaps between the previous work and potential future directions. Think of how to bridge those gaps you discover through reading recent articles — as many as possible — in your area and consider the next steps.

3. Pick a topic helpful for your career.
   Once you realize you have a keen interest in a particular topic, the next thing that you should think about is your career. What are your short- and long-term goals for your career, research, teaching, or practice? If you want to devote yourself to research, your dissertation topic should be easily modified into journal articles for publication. If you plan to work for a teaching-oriented institution, you should consider a topic useful in the classroom. Or, if your goal is to be involved in practice, your topic should focus on, for example, community-related topics. Based on your career, you can begin to narrow a broad interest to a more manageable topic.

4. Don’t start from scratch.
   Are you already working in an assistantship or involved in a specific project or area of research? Don’t ignore the work or project that you’ve done so far! They may be a foundation for your dissertation.

5. Talk about your topic with your academic advisor as early/much as possible.
   Although your dissertation must be your own work, you cannot complete it by yourself. Talk about it with your advisor. She or he will give valuable guidance on how to find related studies, how to clarify or frame your study idea, how to find critical expertise for specific issues (e.g., statistical analysis), how to write each section, and how to finalize your dissertation. Some advisors may seem too busy to meet with you; however, one of their primary responsibilities is to advise students. Make appropriate use of them and their experience.

6. Seek out funding announcements for dissertation and pre-doctoral level research.
   Many dissertation funding opportunities exist, and finding the opportunities can be a great way to learn what research questions you may be able to answer through your own work. Ask your mentor and other research faculty for recommendations. Larger organizations grant pre-doctoral funding, such as the National Institutes of Health and the John A. Hartford Foundation. Smaller funding amounts can be sought through associations that fit your research interest (e.g., disease- or discipline-specific research). Thus, you can also find dissertation funding by contacting these various associations and organizations or searching their websites.

7. Find a mentor.
   A mentor or advisor can be your best friend on campus and an invaluable resource, and he or she can help you navigate the world of research to find a topic suitable for you. Be aware of the skill set you hope to obtain and seek experiences through various opportunities such as graduate assistant positions or being a member of a research team. Search for mentors to maximize your professional learning experiences throughout your graduate career. Seize the wisdom of your mentors by being proactive in establishing professional contacts and telling them precisely what you aspire to learn from them.

   It is a long and hard journey from selecting a dissertation topic to completing a dissertation to eventually starting a career. When you’ve finalized your dissertation, however, you will realize you are now one of those individuals with an expertise in the topic area. Enjoy that role and look for the opportunities to share with other professionals and students. Best of luck!
Care Homes in England Failing to Meet Professional Standards

An article published on June 28 in The Telegraph reported that a fifth of care homes in England are not meeting the professional standards required for giving medications to patients. The Inspectors for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) recently discovered medicines were not being managed properly, sometimes with potentially fatal consequences, and identified poor record keeping when drugs were provided to patients. According to this article, these problems are detailed in a new CQC report covering health, dental, and social care.

Korea’s Aging Population May Cause Real Estate Trouble

On June 26, the China Post published an article regarding potential trouble for Korea’s real estate market. The working-age population in Korea is shrinking and the article indicated that this could burst a real estate market bubble, which could lead to a financial crisis. The China Post reported that the proportion of Korea’s working-age population is expected to shrink from 71.1 percent of all citizens in 2020 to 57 percent in 2039.

South Africans Identify Retirement Concerns

A June 27 article in Business Day on South Africans’ retirement funds indicated that a recent survey by the deVere Group, an independent financial advice provider, found that lack of enough income was the largest retirement concern of respondents who were between the ages of 40 and 50 years. Half of those who were aged between 50 and 60 reported a fear of becoming dependent on others during their older years. According to a long-term insurer quoted in this article, modern contributions are directed more towards pre-retirement years, rather than towards minimizing financial risks during retirement. The South African Treasury Department was reported as indicating that only about 10 percent of the country’s citizens are able to maintain their pre-retirement level spending, regardless of their income. The government is expected to encourage more savings in approved retirement funds for those that earn more than a specified threshold.

Pensions No Longer Optional for Many British Workers

Many employers in the U.K. soon will begin automatic enrollments in workplace pensions. In October, the largest employers will implement these required-by-law workplace pensions, with other smaller firms beginning this policy in the coming years. The rates of contribution will also be phased in, but it will start at two percent and will increase to eight percent by 2017. The auto-enrollment will affect those who are not already participating in a workplace pension, are aged at least 22 years, under the state pension age, and who earn more than a specified annual salary.

France Changes Retirement Age Again

As reported by The Telegraph on June 6, French president Francois Hollande reduced the national retirement age from 62 to 60. It had risen under Hollande’s predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy, in 2010. Although this reform is expected to be costly, the government will offset the price tag through higher worker and employer contributions. It is anticipated that 110,000 individuals will benefit from this change in its first year.

Continued from page 1 - Ageism Presents Dilemmas for Policymakers Worldwide

This PP&AR is expected to be the first in an ongoing series with Age UK — the principal advocacy, policy, and research organization working on behalf of elders in Great Britain — that will explore the implications of research for policy on topics of international importance. This successful collaboration builds on Age UK’s previous support of GSA’s Annual Scientific Meeting program, which has included the sponsorship of two policy-focused symposia to date.

Authors Dominic Abrahams, PhD, and Hannah J. Swift point out that among the 28 countries assessed in the 2008–2009 European Social Survey, 24 percent of respondents reported that they had experienced prejudice because of their gender and 16 percent because of their race or ethnicity. However, 34 percent reported having experienced age prejudice in the last year, 37 percent said they had felt a lack of respect because of their age, and 28 percent said they had been treated badly because of their age. Overall, 46 percent of respondents said they had experienced at least one of these forms of age prejudice in the last year.

Tay K. McNamara, PhD, and John Williamson, PhD, provide data from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which show that the percentage of the charges filed with the commission attributable to age has increased steadily over the past 15 years. In 2011, for example, almost one in four claims was related to age discrimination. Yet these authors go on to identify examples of possible acceptable treatment of people of different ages, including mandatory retirement in certain occupations (e.g., firefighting and law enforcement), senior citizen discounts, age-restricted communities, more frequent testing of older drivers, and lower positioning of older people on organ transplant waiting lists.

The new PP&AR is available for purchase at www.geron.org/bookstore.

“This valuable research highlights that age discrimination is widespread on both sides of the Atlantic,” said James Goodwin, PhD, the head of research at Age UK. “It explores some of the contradictions evident in both the UK and the USA — for example why older people continue to be portrayed as a burden to society, ignoring their economic contribution. We need to look beyond someone’s age at their individual strengths and strive for a society where older people are active, in better health, and accepted as individuals who are important to a community and capable of contributing to the economics of the country as consumers and as producers.”
Grant Brings Support to University of Florida’s Pepper Center
The University of Florida (UF) Institute on Aging has been awarded a major grant from the National Institute on Aging expected to total $5.2 million over five years. The award, in renewed support of the UF Pepper Older Americans Independence Center, will fund studies to better understand the biological and behavioral processes that lead to physical disability in older adults, and to develop and test disability prevention and rehabilitation therapies. The work of the UF Pepper Center focuses on understanding age-related muscle loss from different perspectives, and the potential role of skeletal muscle as a key target for therapies to counteract age-related damage to the body. The center’s researchers work in a wide range of scientific disciplines, including molecular biology, gerontology, epidemiology and behavioral sciences. In addition to conducting basic, clinical and translational studies of age-related changes in the body, another central part of the center’s mission is to train the next generation of researchers and help them develop skills in both research on aging and leadership.

Pennsylvania Moves to Increase Nursing Graduates
The New Jersey-based Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the AARP Foundation are partnering with the Pennsylvania Action Coalition to develop and implement long-term solutions to improving health care in Pennsylvania. One of the efforts to address this issue involves the higher education opportunities to drive the number of nurses with a bachelor’s degree up to 80 percent by 2020. The national average is 50 percent, but in Pennsylvania, the figure is only 41 percent. Due to a faculty shortage, the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association estimates that nearly 3,000 eligible nursing students in the state are not accepted into education programs.

University of South Dakota Modifies Gerontology Minor
The University of South Dakota (USD) is changing the curriculum for its gerontology minor to included more required courses and reduce the number of electives. The minor is designed to be coupled with any major and is encouraged among those working towards a degree in a health science or human services. Some of the required minor courses include those focused on health services administration, research in aging, and social work. The changes will be a part of the 2012–2013 curriculum.

Nova Southeastern Launched Gerontology Graduate Degree Program
Florida’s Nova Southeastern University is now offering a Master of Arts degree in gerontology. According to the school’s literature, the program was developed from the perspective that human beings require meaning and purpose in order to experience life with a sense of well-being as they grow older.

Six New Nursing Specializations Offered at Capella University
Capella University, an accredited online institution, has announced six new specializations in its Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program, which is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. They include Registered-Nurse-to-MSN specializations in diabetes nursing, gerontology nursing, nurse educator, nursing leadership and administration, general nursing, and an MSN specialization in general nursing. The core curriculum incorporates both the Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice and the Essentials of Master’s Education for Advanced Practice Nursing established by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, providing an accelerated pathway toward an MSN.
Survey Examines Senior Living Residents’ Financial Conditions

Boston College’s Center for Retirement Research has released the results of its recent survey on the financial well-being of senior housing residents. Based on the responses of 2,617 older adults, the survey was completed to better understand the current and future economic situation of individuals living in private-pay independent and assisted living communities. The results include information on care provision, financial gifts, costs and satisfaction with communities, methods of community payments, spending and use of assets, financial concerns, and geographic mobility among residents. To access the survey data, visit www.alfa.org/alfa/Residents_Financial_Survey.asp.

Mortgage Crisis Hits Older Americans

A new report released by AARP indicates that more than 1.5 million people age 50 and above have lost their homes since 2007 and at least 3.5 million more remain at risk at this stage of their lives. This report, “Nightmare on Main Street: Older Americans and the Mortgage Market Crisis,” produced by AARP’s Public Policy Institute, found that mortgage debt has been increasing among older Americans. The report reveals that those aged 75 years and older are the fastest growing group with this type of debt, which can affect their retirement budget. The reason behind the increasing debt is not exactly clear, however, 3.5 million older people with mortgages were found to owe more on their home than the value of the home, as of December 2011. This report reveals that older minorities who are mortgage holders were hit the hardest by the mortgage crisis. It can be viewed at www.aarp.org/money/credit-loans-debt/info-07-2012/nightmare-on-main-street-AARP-ppi-cons-prot.html.

NICHE Tools Focus on Older Patients, Caregivers

Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE), a program of the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University College of Nursing, is designed to help hospitals improve the care of older adults. It has developed a number of useful tools in its Need to Know by NICHE series to meet the information needs of older patients and their families. These resources consist of informational sheets for patients and their families on the following topics: skin care, functional decline, delirium, falls, restraint use, communicating the healthcare team, medication management, nutrition, sleep, and vaccinations. A series on dementia is also available. To access these tools, visit www.nicheprogram.org/need_to_know.
Call for Nominations
2013 Busse Research Awards

To promote international research in gerontology, two Busse Research Awards will be given at the 20th IAGG World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Seoul, Korea, June 23-27, 2013. Two gerontologists (junior or mid-career) will be selected. One award will recognize a scientist from the social/behavioral sciences; the other from the biomedical sciences. Awards are $6,000 (USD) each, plus up to $3,000 (USD) for travel/living expenses. Awardees must present a lecture based on their research at the conference. **Deadline for receipt of applications: October 1, 2012.**

For information and application forms, visit WEBSITE: www.geri.duke.edu/busse/busse.html or contact:

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