



From the Director

I welcome you to enjoy this edition of GRECC AdVAnces that features news and updates from GRECCs across the country. This edition highlights the Gerofit programs in Durham and Greater Los Angeles, which have engaged hundreds of Veterans in preventive and restorative exercise. Gerofit programs are spreading into other VAMCs across the country, so be on the lookout for its arrival in your area.

Congratulations to the Ann Arbor GRECC for receiving the Federal Diversity Award, an accomplishment addressing diversity, equity and inclusion. More about the program in these pages.

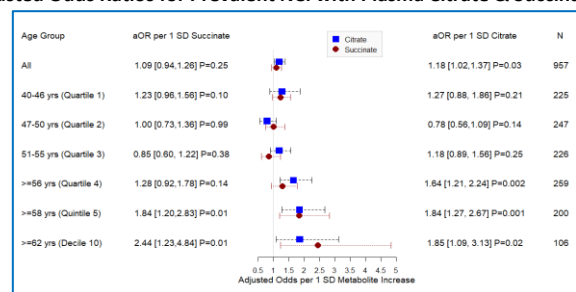
Finally, the Cleveland GRECC, which focus on infectious disease in older adults, has contributed a feature on their work in Immunometabolism and Aging – and the role of inflammation in the development of neurocognitive disorders.

Stay safe and happy reading! The GRECC AdVAnces newsletter is available via email each quarter. Subscribe at: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVHA/subscriber/new?topic_id=USVHA_1036

Immunometabolism and Aging

Inflammation is a major driver of many age-related neurodegenerative disorders, but its source and the mechanisms by which it contributes to disease are poorly understood. Recent insights from metabolism have identified Krebs' cycle metabolites, including citrate and succinate, as possible inflammatory mediators. Researchers at the Cleveland GRECC examined associations between these metabolites in plasma, with neurocognitive impairment (NCI) in a large, prospective AIDS Clinical Trials Group cohort study of older persons with HIV. At entry, higher citrate and succinate concentrations associated with increased NCI risk, and the magnitude of this risk increased with age. Identifying the specific cellular pathways that involve these metabolites may contribute toward a better understanding of the pathogenesis and treatment of age-related cognitive disorders. For additional information, contact [Muralidhar Pallaki, MD, FACP](#).

Adjusted Odds Ratios for Prevalent NCI with Plasma Citrate & Succinate





Education and Evaluation



Clinical

Ann Arbor GRECC Faculty Honored with Federal Diversity Award

Dr. Caroline Vitale, Associate Director of Education and Evaluation and Dr. Julija Stelmokas, Research Scientist, of the Ann Arbor GRECC, were recently awarded the Distinguished Federal Service Diversity Team Award by the Federal Executive Board.

Drs. Vitale and Stelmokas were recognized for their co-creation and co-sponsorship of a monthly interdisciplinary lecture series that covered practical and ethical issues relevant to enhancing the care of older adults with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. Eight invited speakers with local and national presence covered topics such as optimizing the care of LGBTQ older adults, mental health disparities among older adults, access to social resources across diverse contexts, risk factors for cognitive decline in diverse older adults and experiences of LGBTQ patients in hospice and palliative care. The conference was well-attended by faculty and trainees from several disciplines and post-conference survey data was overwhelmingly positive. Drs. Vitale and Stelmokas intend to continue this lecture series in 2021-2022 with an emphasis on caregiving and plan on facilitating an even wider distribution.



Dr. Ginny Creasman, Director of the LTC Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center, presents Drs. Vitale and Stelmokas with the Diversity Team Award at a Federal Executive Board ceremony on May 18, 2021

Gerofit Promotes Value Based Health Care

Gerofit is a Whole Health program that uses frequent reassessments of personal goals and multi-component physical function to provide older Veterans with an individualized exercise program that is provided in a group setting.

Gerofit exercise programs include personally tailored cardio, weight resistance and balance training. Exercise routines are adapted to enable Veterans and their spouses to exercise even with chronic musculoskeletal issues, cardiovascular diseases, obesity, diabetes and some mental health conditions. Veterans who use mobility aids are included and even targeted.

The social connectedness is felt as soon as you enter the gym, with members fully integrated by virtue of their Veteran status. Gerofit is a VA Best Practice with robust outcomes within each of the quadruple aims of a Value-based healthcare program. For more information, contact [Dr. Miriam Morey](#).

