



GRECCs: VA's Network of Aging Centers of Excellence Explores Aging, Age-related Diseases and Promising Interventions.

...what follows is a small sampling from among the hundreds of research investigations currently underway in VHA's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCs).

Ann Arbor GRECC: Antipsychotic Use in Parkinson's disease patients. Use of antipsychotics (APs) in Parkinson's disease (PD) is common. Noting the high rate at which persons with PD experience psychosis and dementia, investigators at the **Ann Arbor GRECC** hypothesized that use of APs placed patients at elevated risk for mortality. Multivariate analysis of a Veterans Health Administration database of PD patients revealed that antipsychotic users had more than twice the risk of death as observed in a matched group of non-users. The commonly used atypical antipsychotics identified during the study were olanzapine, risperidone, and quetiapine. This work highlights the need for caution when prescribing atypical antipsychotics to PD patients and the importance of always considering non-pharmacologic strategies in managing psychosis. To learn more about this research, contact Dr. Helen C. Kales at helen.kales@va.gov.

Little Rock GRECC: Nutrient Intake and Hospitalization. Older Veterans often become severely malnourished during hospitalization, leading to a range of complications and a higher risk of mortality. To prevent this from happening, inpatient programs need to closely monitor each patient's nutrient intake. Yet most hospitals are not adequately staffed to do this. The **Little Rock GRECC** developed and studied a novel means for completing daily patient nutrient intake assessments in less than one-third the time required by traditional methods, and the new approach was found to be more accurate as well. The greater ease and improved accuracy facilitates identification of patients at elevated risk for becoming malnourished. Anyone interested in this new approach to assessing nutrient intake can contact Dennis H. Sullivan, MD at dennis.sullivan@va.gov.

San Antonio GRECC: Proteins Block Neuronal Death. A number of aging-related neurological diseases such as stroke, Lou Gehrig's disease, and Alzheimer's disease, involve the death of neurons in the brain. The **San Antonio GRECC** recently described ferroptosis, a previously unrecognized mechanism of neuronal death. Even more exciting, the investigators identified a protein that disrupts this mechanism. Enhancing the activity and delivery of this protein might be a new approach for supporting healthy brain aging. To find out more about this work, contact Dr. Nicolas Musi at Nicolas.musi@va.gov.

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SA GRECC Celebrates 30 Years! By SA GRECC Staff

The San Antonio GRECC celebrated 30 years of research in aging, educating the next generation of geriatric providers, and developing and disseminating innovative models of care for older adults.

Recently, the SA GRECC organized a number of activities to acknowledge the special anniversary. To kick off the celebration, SA GRECC leaders recognized faculty and staff for their integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence. The ceremony included a special recognition for employees with 25 and 10 years of service. SA GRECC also hosted an ice cream social in which South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) employees got the scoop about the GRECC's mission, goals, projects, and services. In addition, the ice cream social served VA employees the opportunity to meet SA GRECC physicians, researchers and staff.

The director of the Geriatrics Center and Institute of Gerontology at the University of Michigan, Raymond Yung, MB, Ch.B., joined the 30 year celebration as a guest speaker. Dr. Yung acknowledged SA GRECC Director Nicolas Musi, MD, for his leadership role in integrating and strengthening the collaboration of translational research efforts between the SA GRECC and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio—specifically through the Sam and Ann Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies, and the Division of Geriatrics, Palliative and Gerontology.

Instituted in 1987 to serve older Veterans in Central and South Texas, SA GRECC activities focus on the broad themes of metabolism and inflammation. These activities aim at gaining new knowledge about the basic biology of aging, mechanisms regulating longevity, and understanding the pathophysiology of numerous age-related diseases that affect the lives of millions of older Veterans.

