



Alzheimer's Disease Center

Newsletter

Dr. DeCarli Named First Victor and Genevieve Orsi Endowed Chair in Alzheimer's Disease Research

Charles DeCarli, director of the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center and an internationally renowned expert on behavioral neurology, degenerative dementias and neuroimaging, is the first Victor and Genevieve Orsi Endowed Chair in Alzheimer's Research at UC Davis Health System. A professor of neurology, DeCarli's leadership and insights have significantly advanced hope for people around the globe with Alzheimer's disease. His groundbreaking neuroimaging investigations are at

the forefront of advancing understanding about the relationship between the structure and function of the healthy aging brain and changes in the brain associated with vascular and Alzheimer's dementias. Support from the more than \$1.63 million endowed chair award will be used for a sustained fellowship in behavioral neurology at the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center beginning in September 2013.



DeCarli, Director of the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center and Orsi Endowed Chair

Orsi on pg 2

UC Davis Establishes Prestigious New NIH-Funded Research Center for Aging Latinos

Alzheimer's Disease Center will Play Crucial Role in New Center's Focus on Brain Health in Older Latinos

Assembling a nationally respected team of nurse, physician and mental-health leaders with broad expertise in brain health and minority aging, UC Davis has established the Latino Aging Research Resource Center (LARRC), through a prestigious five-year, \$3 million grant from the National Institute on Aging (NIA).

Latinos comprise one-third of the Central Valley's residents. They face health disparities such as socio-economic disadvantage and a lack of adequate health care that place a disproportionate burden on their families, particularly Latinas, in part because Latino families traditionally care for members at home.

LARRC on pg 3

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From left to right: David Kelly, estate planning attorney, the Burton Law Firm, Therese Adams of Adams & Associates, a private fiduciary firm, and Roger Smith of investment advisory firm Planned Solutions, presented the endowment check to Chong Porter, UC Davis vice chancellor of Health Sciences Development and Alumni Relations, during an event on Nov. 1.

“I am extremely honored to receive this endowment, and I’m putting it toward the education of neurology residents interested in dementia, so that we can train the next generation of Alzheimer’s and brain aging researchers,” DeCarli said.

DeCarli’s research focuses on using advanced structural and functional brain imaging to study normal aging, mild cognitive impairment and dementia and the role of genetics, cerebrovascular disease and Alzheimer’s disease on these processes. His investigations have led to advances in prevention and treatment strategies at the UC Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Center and at institutions worldwide focused on imaging and Alzheimer’s, including the UC Davis Imaging of Dementia and Aging (IDeA) Laboratory, which he also directs.

In recognition of his work, DeCarli received in 2010 the J. Allyn Taylor International Prize in

Medicine, which honors leading researchers in biology, medicine and imaging. He currently serves as editor-in-chief of Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders, an international research journal, and shares his expertise with national news media and documentarians.

The endowed chair is made possible by a generous estate gift from the late Victor and Genevieve Orsi to the UC Davis Foundation. Victor Orsi suffered from Alzheimer’s disease as he aged, and the effects of the condition frustrated him a great deal. He and Mrs. Orsi decided to do something about this debilitating disease. So, prior to Victor Orsi’s death in 2006, the Orsis worked with their estate attorney to include provisions in their trust designating this charitable gift for the UC Davis Foundation to support research towards a cure for Alzheimer’s disease. Genevieve Orsi passed away in December 2010. The UC Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Center is one of only 27 research centers designated by the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute on Aging. The center’s goal is to translate research advances into improved diagnosis and treatment for patients while focusing on the long-term goal of finding a way to prevent or cure Alzheimer’s disease. Also funded by the state of California, the center allows researchers to study the effects of the disease on a uniquely diverse population.

For more information, visit:
<http://alzheimer.ucdavis.edu>

The center is one of seven NIA-funded Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research in the nation and is the only one focused on aging Latino cognitive health. It builds on the internationally respected leadership in Latino mental-health disparities and cognitive decline of the UC Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Center, UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities as well as excellence in gerontological nursing of the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis.

Ladson Hinton said, “We need to identify and train a larger cadre of committed researchers if we are to advance the science and reduce cognitive health disparities for aging Latinos and their families.” Ladson Hinton is the principal investigator and center Director. He is also the Director of geriatric psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and a researcher at the Alzheimer’s Disease Center.

The center includes faculty at both the schools of medicine and nursing. Its co-directors are Heather M. Young, associate vice chancellor for nursing and dean of the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis and Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, director of the Center for Reducing Health Disparities, a part of the Clinical and Translational Science Center. “This center is different from others in the United States in that it focuses on older Latinos, an under-studied and historically underserved population with compelling evidence of disparities in access to quality health care,” Aguilar-Gaxiola said. “Its research focuses on workforce-development in California’s Central Valley, an economically depressed region with



the poorest health indicators in the nation.

We are excited at the prospect of transforming and improving the health of older Latinos in urban and

rural areas. To accomplish this goal, we will build on an already established network of academic centers, community leaders and agencies serving large numbers of Latinos in the Central Valley. We are deeply committed to finding innovative ways to support older Latinos and Latinas and their families in their later years, in order to improve their health and quality of life,” he said.

Preventing and treating degenerative brain diseases is a national public-health imperative, and Latinos experience well-documented risk factors for these diseases, such as lower socioeconomic status, less formal education, vascular disease, and diabetes and depressive symptoms.

“Research of a population’s health-care needs must take into account health, socioeconomic factors and historical cultural perspectives,” Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean Young said. “We hope to entice young Latino scientists from across professions to add their expertise and then support them in their research, thus building capacity for the future.”

UC Davis Establishes Prestigious New NIH-Funded Research Center for Aging Latinos

Alzheimer's Disease Center will Play Crucial Role in New Center's Focus on Brain Health in Older Latinos *continued*

The center emphasizes community engagement through mentoring to encourage people to participate in research and disseminate brain-health information to Latino communities. The center will award new pilot research grants each year. Initial pilot projects include:

- Sarah Farias, associate professor in the Department of Neurology, is conducting community-based interviews with older Latinos to examine barriers to and benefits of volunteering for cognitive health.
- Ester Carolina Apeso-Varano, assistant professor at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, is studying caregiver experiences, patient-health outcomes and Latina caregiver well-being.
- Lorena Garcia, assistant professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences, is examining the impact of neighborhood context on older Latinos' risk of diabetes.
- Dawnté R. Early, postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Neurology, is examining life experience modifiers of late life cognitive trajectories in Latinos, African Americans, and Caucasians.

Other U.S. Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research are at UC San Francisco, UCLA, the University of Southern California, the University of Colorado, the University of Michigan and the University of Alabama. The LARRC was established through NIA grant 1P30AG043097-01.



UC Davis Health System is improving lives and transforming health care by providing excellent patient care, conducting groundbreaking research, fostering innovative, interprofessional education, and creating dynamic, productive partnerships with the community. The academic health system includes one of the country's best medical schools, a 619-bed acute-care teaching hospital, a 1000-member physician's practice group and the new Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. It is home to a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center, an international neurodevelopmental institute, a stem cell institute, and a comprehensive children's hospital. Other nationally prominent centers focus on advancing telemedicine, improving vascular care, eliminating health disparities and translating research findings into new treatments for patients. Together, they make UC Davis a hub of innovation that is transforming health for all.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/latinoaging/>

ADC's First Annual Research Symposium: "What's Good for the Body is Good for the Brain"

The UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center held its first annual research symposium titled "What's Good for the Body is Good for the Brain". Chong Porter, associate vice chancellor of health Sciences Development and Alumni Relations, and Charles DeCarli, director of the Alzheimer's Disease Center welcomed those in attendance. The symposium was held on November 1st in recognition of National Alzheimer's Disease Month. The event was sponsored by the Alzheimer's Disease Center, Sunrise Senior Living, the Alzheimer's Aid Society of Northern California, Cimino Care, and the Asian Community Center's Bridge to Healthy Families Project.

Selected speakers included: Heike Wulff, associate professor in the Department of Pharmacology, who discussed "Microglial Potassium Channels as Potential Novel Targets for Alzheimer's Disease" followed by Owen Carmichael, assistant professor in the Department of Neurology, who discussed the "Development of MRI-based Measures of Local Hippocampus Atrophy". Panelists for the topic "What's Good for the Body is Good for the Brain" included Lars Berglund, director of the UC Davis Clinical and Translational Science Center; Jan Nolte, director of the UC Davis center for Regenerative Cures; Bruce Reed, associate director of the Alzheimer's Disease Center; and John Rutledge, vice chair of the research in the Department of Internal Medicine. The poster session followed the panel discussion.

UC Davis Crea un Nuevo Centro De Investigación Dedicado a los Latinos Mayores Financiado por NIH El Centro de Investigación y Recursos para los Latinos Mayores se centrará en la salud mental de los Latinos Mayores

Gracias a una subvención concedida por el Instituto Nacional Sobre el Envejecimiento (NIA, por sus siglas en Inglés), UC Davis ha creado el nuevo Centro de Investigación y Recursos para los Latinos Mayores con un equipo respetado a nivel nacional de líderes de enfermería, medicina y salud mental con amplia experiencia en la investigación y salud del cerebro de personas mayores pertenecientes a minorías. "Hemos adquirido el compromiso de encontrar vías innovadoras de ayuda a los latinos mayores y sus familias en la última etapa de su vida y mejorar su salud y calidad de vida."

"Si lo que queremos es progresar científicamente y reducir las disparidades en salud cognitiva que padecen los latinos de edad avanzada y sus familias, necesitamos identificar y capacitar a un plantel mayor de investigadores comprometidos", afirmó el investigador principal y director del centro Ladson Hinton, director de psiquiatría geriátrica en el Departamento de Psiquiatría y Ciencias Conductuales e investigador

UC Davis Crea un Nuevo Centro De Investigación Dedicado a los Latinos Mayores Financiado por NIH *continua*

del Centro de la Enfermedad de Alzheimer.

Mediante el fortalecimiento y diversificación de los jóvenes y talentosos investigadores que persiguen una carrera profesional en este campo, el centro se ha marcado el objetivo de aliviar el impacto que tiene la enfermedad de Alzheimer y otros trastornos relacionados con el cerebro entre los hispanos mayores, sus familias y seres queridos. El centro se incorpora al liderazgo en salud cognitiva de prestigio internacional con que cuenta UC Davis y aborda las disparidades en salud mental existentes entre los latinos de mayor edad. Así mismo, combina los puntos Fuertes de la enfermería gerontológica de la Facultad de Enfermería Betty Irene Moore, la experiencia del Centro de la Enfermedad de Alzheimer y el Centro para la Reducción de Disparidades en Salud de UC Davis.

“Necesitamos avanzar en nuestros conocimientos científicos para reducir las disparidades y disminuir las diferencias que hay en el cuidado de la salud, mejorando la calidad de vida y el bienestar de los latinos mayores y sus familias”, afirmó el director del centro Ladson Hinton, profesor de geriatría y ciencias conductuales, director de psiquiatría geriátrica en UC Davis y uno de los líderes del Centro de la Enfermedad de Alzheimer de UC Davis.

“Los latinos son el segmento poblacional más grande y de mayor crecimiento de los EE. UU. y padecen disparidades en factores de riesgo de la degeneración cognitiva, como desventajas socioeconómicas y una mayor carga de factores de riesgo vasculares, estrés en los cuidadores de la familia y calidad y acceso a la atención médica de la salud cognitiva”, afirmó Hinton. “Para progresar es esencial contar con una mayor fuerza laboral de investigación, más comprometida y más diversa”. El centro se fundamenta en la colaboración interprofesional e interdisciplinar de investigadores y cuerpo docente en las facultades de medicina y enfermería, quienes se centrarán en la identificación y capacitación de la siguiente

generación de investigadores procedentes de distintas disciplinas que investigarán la salud cognitiva de la población latina. Además de Hinton, Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, director del Centro Para la Reducción de Disparidades en Salud y Heather M. Young, vicerrectora asociada de enfermería y decana de la Facultad de Enfermería Betty Irene Moore en UC Davis, que también son codirectores del centro.

“La investigación de las necesidades médicas de una población debe tener en cuenta los factores socioeconómicos y de salud y perspectiva cultural e histórica”, afirmó Young. “Además, deseamos atraer a jóvenes científicos latinos de todas las profesiones para que nos aporten sus conocimientos y los apoyemos en sus investigaciones para estimular así el desarrollo científico”.

El Valle Central de California tiene una población de aproximadamente 6.5 millones, conformando los latinos la tercera parte del total. Los hispanos experimentan factores de riesgo bien documentados en trastornos cognitivos, incluyendo una situación socioeconómica más baja, una educación menos formal, factores de riesgo vasculares, diabetes y síntomas de depresión. Los que viven en comunidades con un acceso limitado a la atención de salud tienen el riesgo específico de padecer degeneración cognitiva.

“Este centro se diferencia de los demás que hay en los Estados Unidos en que se centra en los latinos mayores, una población marginada históricamente y poco estudiada de la que hay pruebas contundentes de disparidades en el acceso a una atención de salud de calidad”, afirmó Aguilar-Gaxiola. “Sus investigaciones se centran en el desarrollo de la fuerza laboral en el Valle Central de California, una región deprimida económicamente que tiene los peores indicadores de salud del país. Nos apasiona la perspectiva de poder transformar y mejorar la salud de los latinos mayores en las zonas rurales y urbanas. Para lograr este objetivo, ampliaremos nuestra red de

centros académicos, líderes comunitarios y agencias que prestan sus servicios a un gran número de latinos en el Valle Central. “Hemos adquirido el compromiso de encontrar vías innovadoras de ayuda a los latinos mayores y sus familias en la última etapa de su vida y mejorar su salud y calidad de vida.”

Los líderes del centro hacen hincapié en la participación de la comunidad mediante tutorías que estimulan la inscripción y retención de participantes en estudios de investigación y contribuyan a la difusión de información entre las comunidades latinas.

El centro concederá todos los años subvenciones piloto y participará, educará y tutelaré a nuevos investigadores con el fin de garantizar que logren por su cuenta el éxito en su campo de estudio. Los proyectos piloto de investigación iniciales incluyen lo siguiente:

- Se ha observado que el voluntariado en la comunidad mejora la salud cognitiva entre otros grupos étnicos. Sarah Farias, profesora asociada del Departamento de Neurología, dirige un estudio sobre los obstáculos y beneficios que ofrece el voluntariado en la promoción de la salud cognitiva en el que entrevista a latinos de mayor edad de la comunidad.
- Las Latinas tienen una relevancia central en el cuidado de personas mayores con enfermedad de Alzheimer. Ester Carolina Apesoa-Varano, profesora adjunta en la Facultad de Enfermería Betty Irene Moore, está estudiando las experiencias de las cuidadoras, los resultados en la salud de los pacientes y el bienestar de las cuidadoras latinas.

El Centro para el Progreso de la Salud Cognitiva y Atención de la Salud en Latinos de Mayor Edad

de UC Davis es uno de los tan solo siete centros de este tipo que hay en Estados Unidos y el único existente en el área central de California, una región con una enorme población latina. Los otros centros de California son UC San Francisco, UCLA y la Universidad del Sur de California. Los centros restantes del país son la Universidad de Colorado, la Universidad de Michigan y la Universidad de Alabama. El centro de UC Davis se fundó con una subvención de \$3 millones concedida por el NIA, renovable en cinco años.

El centro se fundó con la subvención número 1P30AG043097-01 del Instituto Nacional Sobre el Envejecimiento (NIA). Sistema de Salud de UC Davis El Sistema de Salud de UC Davis mejora la salud de pacientes proveyendo excelente atención médica, conduciendo investigaciones revolucionarias, promoviendo educación innovadora e interprofesional, y fomentando sociedades dinámicas y productivas con la comunidad. El sistema académico de salud incluye una de las mejores facultades de medicina del país, un hospital educativo de 619 camas de cuidados intensivos, un grupo de médicos de 1000 miembros y la nueva Facultad de Enfermería Betty Irene Moore. El Sistema de Salud de UC Davis alberga un centro de cáncer designado por el Instituto Nacional del Cáncer, un instituto internacional de desarrollo neurológico, un instituto de células madre y un hospital infantil integral. Otros centros nacionalmente reconocidos se concentran en avanzar la telemedicina, mejorar la salud vascular, eliminar las desigualdades de salud y traducir los resultados de sus investigaciones en nuevos tratamientos para los pacientes. Juntas, estas entidades hacen de UC Davis un centro de innovación que está transformando la salud de todos.

Para mayor información, visite:
<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/latinoaging/>



Dr. Owen Carmichael Received \$100,000 Grant to Study Alzheimer's Disease



Beginning in midlife, heart disease leads to subtle blood-flow problems in the brain that develop insidiously, gradually damaging neurons and contributing to cognitive decline. Knowledge of clinically silent blood-flow problems in the brain has led to the “healthy heart, healthy mind” hypothesis that preventing or treating heart disease also may help prevent age-associated cognitive decline. However, the healthy heart, healthy mind hypothesis has been difficult to test because of a lack of validated markers of subtle blood-flow problems in the brains of otherwise healthy elderly adults. Owen Carmichael, associate professor in the UC Davis Department of Neurology, will work to develop such biomarkers through a new two-year, \$100,000 grant from the Alzheimer's Association.

Carmichael and his colleagues will enroll 50 cognitively healthy people who already have received multiple clinical evaluations, cognitive testing and MRIs at the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center. They will receive an additional MRI scan designed to detect subtle blood-flow disruptions that may develop over time and damage brain tissue. They also will receive PET scans to measure their amyloid burden and determine

whether preclinical Alzheimer's disease is promoting brain injury and cognitive decline concurrent with blood-flow problems. Amyloid beta plaques in the brain have been associated with Alzheimer's disease.

“We will evaluate the usefulness of our cerebrovascular measurements by examining how they relate to MRI-based measurements of brain injury and cognitive function,” Carmichael said. “Success in this project could lead to the use of these imaging markers for clinical assessment of preclinical cerebrovascular disease and for measuring the effects of cardiovascular treatments on the aging brain.”

The UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center is one of only 27 research centers designated by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Aging. The center's goal is to translate research advances into improved diagnosis and treatment for patients while focusing on the long-term goal of finding a way to prevent or cure Alzheimer's disease. Also funded by the state of California, the center allows researchers to study the effects of the disease on a uniquely diverse population.

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Vascular Brain Injury is a Greater Risk Factor than Amyloid Plaques in Cognitive Aging



Researchers at the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Research Center has found that vascular brain injury from conditions such as high blood pressure and stroke are greater risk factors for cognitive impairment among older people without dementia than is the deposition of the amyloid plaques in the brain that long have been implicated in conditions such as Alzheimer's disease. Published in *JAMA Neurology* (formerly *Archives of Neurology*), the study found that vascular brain injury had by far the greatest influence across a range of cognitive domains, including higher-level thinking and the forgetfulness of mild cognitive decline.

The researchers also sought to determine whether there was a correlation between vascular brain injury and the deposition of beta amyloid (A β) plaques, thought to be an early and important marker of Alzheimer's disease, said Bruce Reed, professor in the Neurology department at UC Davis and associate director of the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Research Center in Martinez, Calif. They also sought to decipher what effect each has on memory and executive functioning.

“Earlier research, conducted in animals, has suggested that having a stroke causes more beta amyloid deposition in the brain. If that were the case, people who had more vascular brain injury should have higher levels of beta amyloid. We found no evidence to support that.” Reed continued, “half of the study participants had abnormal levels of beta amyloid and half vascular brain injury, or infarcts. It was really very clear that the amyloid had very little effect, but the vascular brain injury had distinctly negative effects.”

“The more vascular brain injury the participants had, the worse their memory and the worse their executive function – their ability to organize and problem solve,” Reed said.

Reed said the study is important because there's an enormous amount of interest in detecting Alzheimer's disease at its earliest point, before an individual exhibits clinical symptoms. “What this study says is that doctors should not forget about cerebrovascular disease, which is also very common in this age group and could also cause cognitive problems. Even if a person has amyloid plaques, those plaques may not be the cause of their mild cognitive symptoms.”

Other study authors include Natalie Marchant of UC Berkeley and the Buck Institute for Research on Aging; Roxana Dhada and William Jagust of UC Berkeley; Charles DeCarli and Dan Mungas of UC Davis; Stephen Kriger and Micheal Weiner of UC San Francisco; and Nerses Sanossian, Wendy Mack and Helena Chui of the University of Southern California.

Reflections on a Long-Time Supporter of the Alzheimer's Disease Center *Janet Capello*

The Alzheimer's Disease Center is fortunate to have many generous families and organizations support its research endeavors. However, there is one particular individual, Janet R. Capello, who stands out as she has been an active supporter of the center for 19 years. Janet passed away December 6, 2012 after a brief illness. She was a lifelong resident of Vallejo and extremely proud of her Italian American Heritage, always trying to make things better for those around her. She was a graduate of both Vallejo High School and Vallejo Junior College and worked for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for over 40 years before retiring in 1996.

Janet will be remembered for many things. She was an influential voice in local politics promoting candidates she endorsed. She served on the Civil Service Commission and the Charter Review Board with the City of Vallejo. Janet was a member of St. Vincent's Church but her real passion was the Sons of Italy. Janet was a member of the Beatrice Portinari Lodge #1626 for over 63 years. During that time she served in countless positions including Past Vice President of the Grand Lodge of California. She served as Chair of the annual Fashion Show as well as the Scholarship Committee which awards scholarships to high school students with Italian-American heritage or foreign language students. At her passing, she held the position of Orator of the Grand Lodge and Secretary of the United Lodges. Janet was also a member of several other local organizations in Vallejo.

Janet's leadership and active involvement with the Sons of Italy served as a catalyst for raising

money for Alzheimer's research through the lodge's annual wine and appetizer event in May. The Vallejo Sons of Italy Virgilio and Beatrice Portinari Lodges began making contributions to the Alzheimer's Disease Center 19 years ago with biannual donations from proceeds accumulated every two years. In 2008, the results of their efforts became even more fruitful as the trips to Sacramento became annual events to present their donations.

Although the center is primarily funded through research grants and contracts from federal, state and private sponsors, donations from the Sons of Italy have allowed for the purchase for clinic equipment and other items that are not provided by research dollars, yet are important to maintaining and growing operations.

We will greatly miss Janet's warmth and generosity.



*Janet Capello
Sons of Italy Check Presentation to the Neurology Department
November, 2011*



*Janet Capello & the Sons of Italy Members with Dan Mungas (top left)
Sons of Italy Check Presentation to the Neurology Department
November, 2011*

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE CENTER is funded by the National Institute on Aging and the California Department of Public Health. The Martinez site is supported in part by the Veterans Health Administration, Martinez.

The UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center includes members of the following UC Davis departments: Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Neurology, Psychiatry, Internal Medicine and Pathology

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