The Doctoral Program in Gerontology celebrates its 15th year “Preparing the Next Generation of Gerontology Scholars.” We are so proud of our over 35 graduates working across the country in policy, academic, and research settings on behalf of older adults and their families. We are thankful for our over 60 affiliate faculty at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) campuses who make this joint program a model of success. Enjoy reading the tremendous “good news” of our alumni, faculty, and students.

Selected Faculty Affiliate Research

Ann Gruber-Baldini, PhD
Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine

It is estimated that there are more than 300,000 hip fractures in the U.S. and that 15-30% of hip fracture patients have Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) at the time of the fracture. Most intervention research specifically excludes patients with ADRD, a group with poor outcomes after hip fracture. The purpose of this study is to test the feasibility and impact of a home-based intervention specifically designed to improve physical and psychosocial outcomes among those with ADRD who suffer a hip fracture and their caregivers. The aims: Pilot test a home-based, 8-week dementia-specific functionally-based graduated caregiver-involved intervention, “Function Focused Care for the Cognitively Impaired: Hip Care at Home (FFC-HC)”, in hip fracture patients with ADRD who return to the community with family caregivers; Evaluate the 2-month improvement in patient outcomes; and evaluate the 2-month improvement in caregiver knowledge, performance of FFC, burden, depression, and fear of falling.

Amanda Lehning, PhD, MSW
University of Maryland School of Social Work

Dr. Lehning’s research focuses on the effects of policies, programs, and neighborhood infrastructure on older adults’ health, well-being, and ability to age in place. She is particularly interested in work that can address inequities in later life. Currently Dr. Lehning is collaborating with Dr. Christine Mair, a program faculty affiliate, (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, UMBC) and colleagues on a 15-month study (funded through the UMB-UMBC Research and Innovation Partnership Grant Program) to compile and analyze a comprehensive dataset of the multiple biomedical, psychosocial, and environmental characteristics that can contribute to cardiovascular disease risk. Specifically, using individual, household, and neighborhood data of middle-aged adults living in Baltimore City, this project is examining the pathways through which the physical and social environments influence CVD risk factors, including the potential intermediary effects of psychological distress and limited health care access.

Sarah Tom, PhD, MPH
Pharmaceutical Health Services Research, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy

Cognitive reserve refers to the ability to buffer against brain pathology, including types commonly found post mortem in the brains of people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. Dr. Tom hypothesizes that reserve is a key reason why some older adults have normal cognitive function despite the presence of neuropathology. She proposes to use four unique datasets that contain information on early life social environment, later life cognitive tests, and autopsy-based neuropathology measures from geographically diverse study populations: the Adult Changes in Thought Study, the Honolulu Asia Aging Study, the Religious Orders Study, and the Rush Memory and Aging Project. Dr. Tom will test the hypotheses that an advantaged early life environment, independently of and synergistically with adult social advantage, is related to greater later life cognitive reserve, even in the presence of significant neuropathology.
Faculty News

A selection of grant funding and awards are reported below for our 50 faculty affiliates.

Grant Funding:

Barbara Resnick, Nursing, is PI of an R01, “Dissemination and Implementation of Function Focused Care for Assisted Living” and co-PI of the R01, “Implementation of EIT-4-BPSD in Nursing Homes.”

Sue Dorsey and Barbara Resnick, Nursing, are co-PIs of a P30 entitled, “Omic Associated with Self-management Interventions for Symptoms (OASIS).”

Sarah Tom, Pharmacy, was awarded an NIA K award, “Early Life Environment and Later Life Dementia, Cognition, Neuropathology, and Reserve.”

Ann Gruber-Baldini, Medicine, is PI of a subcontract for “Aging, Disability, and LTC Policy IDIQ - Technical Area 1 proposal.” Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity contract. ASPE, AHRQ, and ONC, DHHS Program Support Center. Primary contractor: IMPAQ International, LLC.

Ann is also PI of an R21, “Hip Fracture Caregiver Intervention Function Focused Care Hip Care at Home.”

Ann Gruber-Baldini and Charlene Quinn, Medicine, are Co-PIs of NHTeleED project: “Bringing Telemedicine to Maryland Skilled Nursing Facilities: Expanding Access to Care Through an Academic, Clinical, and Telemedicine Consortium.” CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

Robert Rubinstein, Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration and Policy, was awarded an NIA grant, "Adult Day Services: Cultural Contexts and Programming Effects (Supplement)."

Robert Rubinstein and Ann Christine Frankowski, Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration and Policy, were awarded two NIA grants. 1) "Strategies for Managing Persons with Dementia in Assisted Living," and 2) "Health and Long-term Care of Lesbian and Gay Older Adults."

Amanda Lehning, Social Work, and Christine Mair, Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration and Policy, are co-PIs on a UMB-UMBC Research and Innovation Partnership Grant called, “Neighborhood Environment and Risk of Cardiovascular Disease in Baltimore City.”

Awards:

Elizabeth Galik, Nursing, received the Southern Nursing Research Society and John A. Hartford Foundation Geriatric Nursing Research Award.

Loren Henderson, Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration and Policy, was selected as a 2016 Hrabowski Innovation Fund winner and was named UMBC Innovation Fellow.

Amanda Lehning, Social Work, was awarded the Faculty Achievement (Early Career) Award from the Association of Gerontology Education in Social Work (AGESW).

Leslie Morgan, Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration and Policy, received the Mildred M. Seltzer Distinguished Service Honor from AGHE in March 2016.

Mary M. Rodgers, Medicine, was the recipient of the 2016 John H.P. Maley Award for Outstanding Contributions to Leadership in Research. This honor is given by the American Physical Therapy Association’s, Section on Research that recognizes outstanding leadership in research over a sustained period of time.
New Students

**Evelyn Kim, MA,** hails from Seoul, Korea. She researched cognitive control system at a Cognition Lab with supervisor Dr. Min-Shik Kim. Evelyn designed a new paradigm to observe the efficiency of cognitive control by manipulating types or patterns of cognitive conflicts using two Stroop stimuli. Her research involving the Stroop Effect was published in The Korean Journal of Experimental and Cognitive and Biological Psychology. Her current research interest is how cognitive aging or impairments affect aging individuals and how to intervene in their daily life. She hopes to contribute to improve the quality of life of aging adults.

**Roberto Millar** earned his BA in psychology with a minor in gerontology from Hood College. During his time at Hood, Roberto was as a research assistant in the comparative cognition and the gerontology laboratories. In the Geriatric Assessment Research Lab (GARL) he collected and analyzed data on the spirituality of older adults receiving palliative care in hospital settings. In addition to field research, he completed a semester-long internship at one of Frederick City's assisted-living facilities. There he worked directly with older adults experiencing varying degrees of cognitive impairment. Now, Roberto wishes to continue adding to the wealth of knowledge on the social and cultural forces affecting older adulthood. His career goals include teaching and researching the end-of-life care experience of underrepresented older adults at home and in community settings.

**Eugenia Stephenson, MA,** graduated from Georgia State. She worked as a research assistant on projects related to gerontology higher education, older women’s sexual health and care team review. Her research interests focus on the role of location and predisposing characteristics as predictors on accessing healthcare services in rural communities. Eugenie's previous work includes her master’s thesis titled, “Perceptions of Access to Healthcare Resources among Rural Dwelling Older Georgians” which sought to explain these differences. She aims to contribute to future gerontology literature with primary goals of increasing access to services through research which supports the development of effective policies to address barriers.

Welcome class of 2016
(from left):

Eugenie Stephenson
Roberto Millar
Haesung (Evelyn) Kim
Student Awards

Elizabeth Couser, Jennifer Howard-Doering and Jing Xu, were recipients of the 2015 Gerontology Early Career Development Award, funded by the Gay Wise Foundation.

Sarah Holmes was the winner of the Geriatrics and Gerontology Education and Research (GGEAR) Program Outstanding Research Award 2016 at the UMB Graduate Research Conference.

Jing Xu is a recipient of a 2016 UMBC dissertation fellowship.

Current Student Publications


Dai M, Roberto P, Tom SE, Gentry E, Stuart B. “Quantifying the Cost of Disability Transitions in Medicare.” Journal of Aging and Health. 2016. Accepted


The Gerontology Early Career Development Award

The Gerontology Early Career Development Award, funded through a generous donation, fosters early academic productivity in aging research.

This prestigious award recognizes excellence in the student’s academic work and in research, which serves as the foundation for becoming an independent scholar in the field of gerontology.

The fund provides merit-based awards to students in the Doctoral Program in Gerontology. Awards range from $500-$2000.

The 2016 recipients are Elizabeth Couser, Jing Xu, and Jennifer Howard-Doering.

Left to right: Jay Magaziner, Elizabeth Couser, Denise Orwig, and Jing Xu
Not pictured: Jennifer Howard-Doering
**Alumni News**

Leanne Clark-Shirley was awarded a contract with the American Geriatrics Society to evaluate the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP). She is the Project Director. The John A. Hartford Foundation is the funder of the evaluation. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is the funder of the GWEP grant program.


Tara McMullen earned Special Recognition for her work around the IMPACT Act of 2014. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Center for Clinical Standards & Quality, 2015. In addition, she was awarded the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Secretary's Award for Meritorious Service: ASPE SES Analytic Team, 2016.

Quincy Samus, received the 2015, first-ever, Graduate Program in Life Sciences (GPILS) Alumni Award. Quincy Samus was the 2015 Keynote Speaker for the UMB Graduate Research Conference (GRC).

Daniel Van Dussen was named the 2015 Ohio Educator of the Year by the Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education.

Leanne Clark-Shirley, Kate de Medeiros, and Rebecca Perron were featured alumni at the 15th Year Celebration and served on our distinguished Alumni Panel.

Israel Cross has been awarded the following honors: CMS Honor Dedication to Transparency Award as part of the Mediare.gov Star Ratings Team; Dedication to Transparency to Better Serve the American Public Award—for rolling-out the overall hospital star ratings to improve consumer comprehension of the health care quality data; and the USPHS Commissioned Corps Commendation Medal.

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**Featured Research of Graduates**

Laura Girling, PhD, MS

Research Scientist in the Center for Aging Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

**Dissertation Title:** *The Subjective Construction of Disease Control among Older Adults with Type II Diabetes*

While the development and progression of some chronic conditions is predominately beyond the control of the individual, diabetes, one of the most prevalent chronic conditions (9.3% of the population), is largely considered a controllable disease. Although diabetic control is well-defined within the medical community and associated literature, little is known about how the diabetic population themselves understand this concept. In order to address this gap in the literature, in-depth secondary qualitative analyses were conducted of interviews with 83 (European-American, n=42; African-American n=41) older adults (≥50 years) diagnosed with diabetes. Inductive content analysis of 4,237 pages of interview data revealed an explanatory framework of five themes describing varied understandings of diabetes control: (a) glycemic control, (b) treatment adherence, (c) asymptomatic, (d) level of pharmaceutical need, and (e) illusory. Analyses also revealed several management approaches coinciding to one’s conceptualization of control: (a) reactive, (b) informed, (c) medicinal reduction, (d) fatalistic. Furthermore, race and gender differences emerged from the data. Results demonstrate that the term control is multifaceted, including both clinical and lay interpretations. Findings inform clinical practice, psychometric assessment, and refine research in this area.
Lynn Miescier, PhD, MS
Social Scientist in the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Dissertation Title: **Advance Care Planning and Family Structure in Late Life**

Currently, 10 – 15% of individuals over age 65 have no living biological or step-children, and 41% are unmarried. By 2030, the proportion of those without partners or surviving children will likely exceed 30%. With no close relatives to participate in advance care planning, older persons may be vulnerable to unwanted medical procedures. Only half of those over age 50 have an advance directive. Data were drawn from the 2012 Health and Retirement Study (HRS) (N = 18,613), and exit interviews from 2000 – 2012 with proxies of HRS decedents (N = 8,658). Overall, 14.4% of respondents over age 50 were biologically childless (13.71%), or had outlived all children (0.69%). If biologically childless, 4.85% had living stepchildren. 15.54% of men and 13.43% of women were childless (p < 0.01). Childlessness was highest among never married men, 80.12% (p < 0.0001). Nearly 53% of childless women lived in a nursing home/long-term-care setting at the time of final illness, compared with 39.93% of women with living children, with smaller percentages for men (37.38% of childless men, and 28.50% of men with living children). Never married childless men and divorced men with living children are at higher risk of failing to discuss end-of-life issues. These findings point toward a need for new approaches to advance care planning relative to gender and family structure.

Cristan Smith, PhD, MA
A post-doctoral fellow in the Drug Dependence and Epidemiology Trainee Program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Dissertation Title: **Lifetime Drug Use and Mental and Physical Health at and Beyond Midlife**

Increased rates of lifetime drug use among older adults represents a new and potentially important dimension of health over the life course, particularly for the aging baby boomers and subsequent cohorts. Despite extensive data detailing differences in substance use across cohorts, few studies examine the empirical relationships between illicit drug use and health of mature and older adults. The purpose of the current study was to address this gap in the literature. Linear mixed models were used to explore whether lifetime drug use and four extent of use indicators were associated with self-rated health status at mid- and later life, accounting for individual level measures (demographics and other lifestyle factors) and neighborhood level context (neighborhood disadvantage). Data were drawn from an NIA intramural study of community dwelling adults aged 45 and older who participated in wave one of the Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span study. Separate analyses for mental (MCS from SF-12) and physical health (PCS from SF-12), were conducted in the total sample (N=1671) and the sub-sample who ever used drugs (N=1057). Results of the analyses show that lifetime drug use was not associated with mental or physical health. Among those who reported ever using an illicit drug, none of the four extent of use indicators predicted MCS, but two indicators, recent use and types of drugs used, predicted PCS. Individual-level predictors relate differently to mental and physical health and neighborhood context was only associated with physical health in the total sample. Findings from this study inform future research in substance use over the life course and have implications for practice and policy.
Rasheeda Johnson, PhD, MS
Health insurance specialist and analyst at the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services

Dissertation Title: Effects of Limb Length Discrepancy on Functional and Health-Related Outcomes in Hip Fracture Patients

Limb length discrepancy (LLD), a common complication following hip fracture, is present when paired lower extremities are of unequal lengths. There is a paucity of LLD studies in older adults and no study to date has investigated LLD in hip fracture patients, a large population of older adults experiencing late life disability and decline in functional mobility. Specific aims of this study were to: (1) Determine the reproducibility, validity and repeatability of Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry-Linear Pixel Count (DXA-LPC) method to measure limb length and assess for LLD in hip fracture patients, using mixed effects regression modeling; (2) Determine the prevalence and changes in LLD over the 12-months post fracture using general linear modeling; and (3) Determine the association between LLD severity and functional and health-related outcomes during 12-months post fracture using general linear modeling. Data come from the Baltimore Hip Studies 4th cohort (BHS-4; 1998-2004), a study of 180 community-dwelling women age 65+ with incident hip fractures enrolled in a RCT of an in-home exercise intervention. Three expert assessors and study PI measured limb lengths from whole-body DXA images electronically stored from BHS-4 at baseline and 2, 6, and 12 months post-fracture. Reproducibility of DXA-LPC was moderate, while validity and repeatability were both excellent. Majority (~75%) of participants experienced LLD; findings were consistent across all study time-points. Findings show that LLD severity contributes significantly to falls during the year following a hip fracture. Findings also indicate clinically meaningful differences in functional outcomes between LLD groups. Intervventional studies should investigate shoe lift therapy efficacy and other post-operative mechanisms to minimize the impact of LLD on post-fracture functional recovery.

WE WILL BE AT GSA
The Center for Research on Aging and the PhD in Gerontology will be at Booth 209 in the Exhibit Hall
Our Networking Social is Friday, 11/18, 6-7:30
Sheraton: Waterbury and Lagniappe Rooms
Dr. John Schumacher, Associate Professor, has been named the UMBC Co-Director for the Doctoral Program in Gerontology at UMB/UMBC. John has been a faculty member in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Health Administration and Policy since 2002 and serves as an affiliate faculty member in UMBC’s School of Public Policy. Dr. Schumacher holds a secondary appointment in the Department of Epidemiology & Public Health and is a fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. As a medical sociologist and social gerontologist, Dr. Schumacher’s research examines physician-older patient interactions across diverse sites from assisted living settings to hospital emergency departments. Dr. Schumacher looks forward to the continued growth and success of the program.

Julie Rosenthal joined the Doctoral Program in Gerontology on the UMBC side as the Program Management Specialist in September 2015. She is a graduate of the College of Business and Management (now the Smith School) at the University of Maryland College Park with a degree in Business Administration. Julie is the Founder and Director of Food on the 15th, a non-profit that teaches children about philanthropy by having them collect, sort and deliver free, non-perishable groceries directly to low-income senior citizens in Howard County. Food on the 15th has delivered over 20,000 free bags of groceries and toiletries over the last 10 years. www.foodonthe15th.org/.

Julie, thanks for joining our team!

Giving Back to the Program
Consider being part of the Program’s success by supporting the program through our newly launched GeroGiving Website, www.medschool.umaryland.edu/GeroGiving