



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT CENTER ON AGING

Welcome

Thank you for your kind feedback on our January issue. This month the spotlight is on research and the Armin Grams Memorial Research Award.

The Armin Grams Memorial Research Award

Why is there a call for research projects on aging and longevity?

There are over 55 million people over age 65 in the US as of the 2020 Census. This represents the fastest growth in older adults since the 1880s. Vermont represents the fourth oldest state in the nation with 1 in 5 people over the age of 65. Advancing age is the major risk factor for a number of chronic diseases in humans, including dementia, and predictions suggest there will be 17,000 adults with Alzheimer's in Vermont by 2025. Older adults have unique needs and current health care systems are not yet equipped to skillfully care for older adults and their caregivers.

Much of the funded research, especially clinical trials, excludes older adults, so we don't know if treatments work as well in older adults or if side effects might be more common. Caregivers and family involvement is an important part of caring for older adults, but they are not often included in research. Finally, research on aging so often focuses on limitations or problems as opposed to healthy aging and longevity.

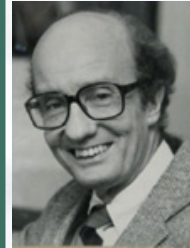
The Center on Aging is committed to creating a research hub that drives cutting edge research in aging, longevity, and caregiving, that can then be incorporated into education, public policy and practice. To further our research mission, we aim to support pilot grants that will develop the pool of aging and longevity focused researchers at UVM.

What types of research have been funded?

The Center on Aging Grant was last funded in 2016. Dr. Katharine Cheung, interim Director for the Center on Aging, received this pilot award to study "**Trajectories of Frailty and Resilience in Older Adults with Advanced Kidney Disease.**" This research identified that both physical function and resilience declined in the first 4 months of starting dialysis and on average recovered to baseline by 1 year. The preliminary data from this pilot award was used to secure extramural funding from the National Palliative Care Research Center to conduct a trial of telepalliative care in older adults initiating dialysis.

Center on Aging faculty advisory board member, Nancy Gell, PhD., PT, MPH, received the award to study "**Mobile Technology to Support Physical Therapy Exercise for People Aging with Arthritis.**"

Continued, next column...



Armin Grams

Armin Grams came to the University of Vermont in 1970 to establish the Human Development and Family Studies Program.

His early work was in the area of parent-child relationships but his focus soon switched to human relationships and sexuality. In the later years of his career, his interest turned to gerontology.

Dr. Grams developed and taught several courses on gerontology and he was instrumental in establishing both the UVM Center on Aging and a Gerontology Certificate program. He also served in many national and international organizations in the area of aging including President of the Association of Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE), 1992-1993.

In May of 2002, Dr. Grams received an honorary doctor of letters from his alma mater, Concordia University. Grams retired from UVM in 1990.

Continued...

Who is eligible?

Early career faculty (within 10 years of their last degree) who have identified a committed mentor, and more advanced investigators interested in aging and longevity research are eligible. The Center on Aging is particularly interested in funding teams that include investigators from different departments or colleges.

Why is this a matching grant?

One of the core missions of the Center on Aging is to promote aging research engagement across the UVM campus. By providing matching grant funds the Center maximizes the impact of the pilot grant program. In order to not exclude potential grantees from applying, smaller budget request of up to \$25,000 without matching funds will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Research News



Julie Dumas, PhD, a member of the Faculty Advisory Board of the Center on Aging, was an early recipient of the Armin Grams Award, along with her co-PI, C. Lawrence Kien, MD, PhD.

They received a \$3.3M five-year R01 grant from the National Institutes of Aging entitled, **“Fatty Acid Modulation of Brain Function in Older Adults.”** This study will examine the role of saturated fat compared to monounsaturated fat in cognition, brain functioning, mood, and physical activity in healthy older adults.

Dr. Dumas explains, "Much of the fat eaten by North Americans comes from meat and dairy products, which contain equal amounts of saturated and monounsaturated fat. Scientists have observed that the diet eaten by people in countries such as Italy (the Mediterranean Diet) may have benefits with respect to the risk of Alzheimer’s disease. With this diet, saturated fat is very low and monounsaturated fat is high. However, these observational studies lack the ability to determine cause and effect. Palmitic acid and oleic acid are the names of the principal saturated and monounsaturated fats in the diet. In our new four-week study, we will compare the effects of these two fats on brain function in healthy adults aged 65 to 75 years."

This research was begun with an Armin Grams Award in 2014.

Research Registry

As an Age-friendly University, UVM strives to include older adults in the core activities of the university, including research.

Center on Aging faculty advisory board member, Nancy Gell, PhD, PT, MPH, established the Vermont Older Adult Research Registry. Dr. Gell saw the value in giving older Vermonters an easy way to participate in research. In turn, researchers benefit from having a streamlined way to recruit older volunteers for their studies. Joining the registry doesn't mean an obligation to be in any study. People on the registry are informed about research opportunities, but after that, it's up to the individual if they want to participate.

The Registry recruits older Vermonters to engage with aging research and facilitates volunteer opportunities to work with UVM students on Intergenerational Service learning. Adults age 50+ are eligible to participate.

To find out more, or to join the Registry, visit

<https://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/vermont-older-adult-research-registry>

Coming Events

April 30, 2024

Armin Grams Memorial Research Grant
Proposal Deadline

Submit through InfoReady:

<http://uvm.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1929196>

April 16, 2024

18th Annual Vermont Geriatrics Conference

The DoubleTree

[Information and Registration](#)

May 7, 2024

Gerontology Symposium

The DoubleTree

Center on Aging

The University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine

The Courtyard at Given, N208

89 Beaumont Avenue

Burlington, VT 05405

(802) 656-0292

aging@uvm.edu