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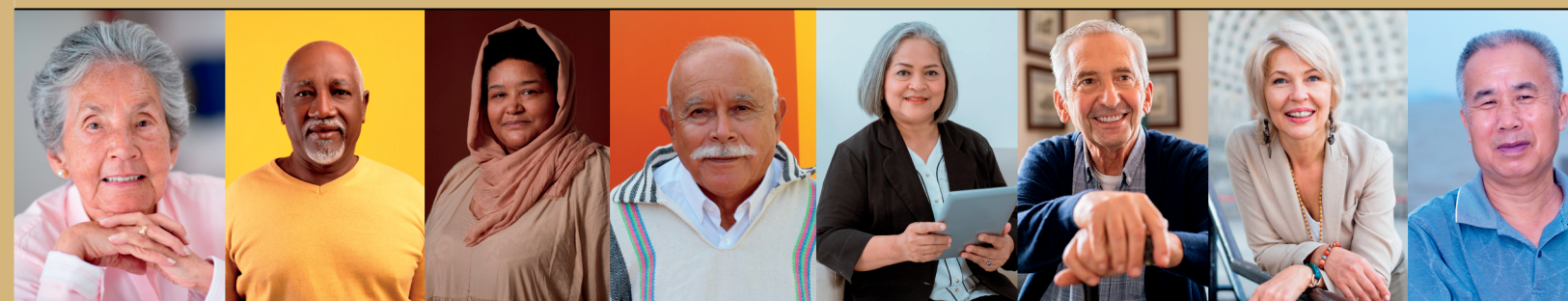


Visit
research.cuanschutz.edu/olderadults

For additional questions, inquiries can be directed to:
olderadultresearch@cuanschutz.edu

Jodi Waterhouse, MHA
Director, Outreach Programs,
CU Anschutz
Multidisciplinary Center on Aging
Kathryn Nearing, PhD
Principal Investigator
CU Anschutz
Division of Geriatrics
Natascha Palmer, MPH
Communications Director
CU Anschutz
Office of Regulatory Compliance
Carla Rodriguez, MS Marketing Candidate
Marketing & Communications Student Assistant
CU Anschutz Office of Regulatory Compliance

OLDER ADULTS IN RESEARCH NEWSLETTER



Letter to Our Community

by Kathryn Nearing, PhD

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Older Adults in Research Newsletter – a community newsletter focused on research and health for older adults. We will publish the newsletter twice a year, in English and Spanish, to bring you stories of the research projects and those involved – from older adults leading the research to Older Adult Research Specialists who are community members pursuing encore careers in research to support the inclusion of older adult peers as study participants.

Participation in clinical research informs healthcare providers about the best ways to provide medical treatment to older adult populations. Unfortunately, older adults are among the populations underrepresented in clinical research. We hope these newsletters can help raise awareness about the importance of older adults participating in research. In addition, we will share information about opportunities to become involved in the workforce as Older Adult Research Specialists and as research study participants. Finally, we will also bring you health-related information that we are learning from aging-related research.

In this first issue, we feature a clinical trial exploring the effects of exercise as we age. The project leader shares why this research is important. Additionally, we profile an Older Adult Research Specialist – a new role at CU Anschutz to support the recruitment and retention of older adults and other underrepresented populations in clinical research. Finally, we feature our research studies website, where you can go to learn about CU Anschutz clinical trials.

Please subscribe to the newsletter to stay connected as part of the older adults in research community by scanning the QR Code on the back or visit our Website:
research.cuanschutz.edu/olderadults

A Job Where You Can Make a Difference

by Jodi Waterhouse, MHA



Ms. Jerrie Dansky - OARS Graduate Inaugural Cohort

In December 2021, CU Anschutz became the fourth medical research institution in the world to receive the Age-Friendly University designation, an effort led by the CU Anschutz Multidisciplinary Center on Aging (MCoA). Our priorities as an Age-Friendly university are Research and Innovation, Encore Work, and Intergenerational Learning. One of our Age-Friendly University initiatives is a new program to train and promote the hiring of Older Adult Research Specialists to support the recruitment and retention of older adult peers in clinical trials. Older adult populations are among the most underrepresented in research. The work of Older Adult Research Specialists (OARS) can help more older adults learn about and take part in trials, thereby improving the evidence available to inform quality health care for older adults.

Please meet one of our OARS graduates from the Inaugural Cohort, Ms. Jerrie Dansky!

I am a native Coloradoan, born in Denver. I completed my undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado Denver in Communications and Psychology with a Business minor. I also studied in the Master of Public Administration program at CU Denver but did not quite finish. I have worked in both the nonprofit and private sectors. My background is diverse. I worked for a statewide trade association for landscape contractors and was their Education and Communications Coordinator. I worked in real estate, selling new homes, and as a Loan Assistant for a private mortgage company. In addition, I worked for a Colorado-based airline. Also, I interned in graduate school for the Colorado State Department of Health and worked as an intern on the Governor's Commission on Government Productivity under

Your Participation in Research Studies Can Be Life Changing for Society

by Carla Rodriguez, MS Marketing candidate

As we age, we begin to see life through a different lens. In grade school, we “can’t wait to be older.” Overnight that perspective can change. Upon reflection, we laugh, remembering past experiences, some of which we want to share with the world and others we want to keep secret. We often remember those who left us unexpectedly and sometimes regret not spending more time together. We frequently ask ourselves, “How is it possible that our favorite songs are now labeled as ‘old classics’?” We feel young in our hearts, yet our knees constantly remind us that we have walked many miles throughout our lives. Although we will never be younger, we still have the opportunity to enjoy ourselves while making an impact in the future. We can achieve this by taking action in our health decisions and participating in research studies.

Over a century, many health discoveries have been made, which have increased life expectancy from 50 years old to 74 years young. Although this brings hope to humanity, it is heartbreaking to find out that older adults are continuously underrepresented in research studies. Adults aged 60 and older are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, this age group will nearly double by 2030. As this segment of our population continues to grow, so does the need to know how to prevent, diagnose and treat the most common and/or impactful health conditions in older adults.

The Multidisciplinary Center of Aging at CU Anschutz Medical Campus studies topics related to aging and how to improve life as people get older. Participating in research studies can be essential to making this happen and is one of many ways to make a difference.

Many studies need adults aged 60 and older. The participants' eligibility will depend on the research. It is crucial to have participants of different ages, sexes/gender, races, and ethnicities for results to be meaningful for more people. Participants can contribute to research in various ways. Some include filling out surveys and participating in interviews; others involve testing new medications or behavioral health and lifestyle interventions. There are many different types of clinical trials, including those looking at physical activity through exercise, healthy brain aging, and mental health. We encourage you to participate in these studies. To explore studies of interest, please visit our website research.cuanschutz.edu/olderadults. Your contribution can be life-changing for all.



Underrepresentation of Older Adults in Research



“Older persons were consistently denied inclusion in clinical trials of treatments, including those particularly relevant to them”
(Chang et al. 2020:15)



"Medications and vaccines commonly used in older adults have not been adequately evaluated in this population"
(Veronese et al 2021:4)



“Older patients [particularly those >75] remained disproportionately underrepresented in clinical trials of Alzheimer’s disease”
(Chang et al. 2020:14)

You can make the difference. Get involved!

Visit us today at
research.cuanschutz.edu/olderadults

Governor Roy Romer. I currently work part-time at the Jewish Community Center of Denver doing receptionist work, in addition to my new position as an Older Adult Research Specialist at CU Anschutz, Division of Geriatrics.

What was your motivation for joining the Older Adult Research Training Program?

I have never quite “loved” my work. However, the OARS program has given me opportunities that I did not have before. I feel I can give back to the community and feel like I am doing important work where I can make a difference. I am so thrilled to be working at CU Anschutz. This is the first time in my adult work life that I’m **PROUD** to wear my name badge! It has only taken me until age 67 to find meaningful work.

"We are a large segment of the population and should not be forgotten in terms of what we have to say and what we have to offer!"

What would you like older adults to know about the importance of participating in research and clinical trials?

Older adults must have a voice in clinical trials. It is a fact that older adults are forgotten in terms of participating in clinical trial studies. We are a large segment of the population and should not be forgotten in terms of what we have to say and what we have to offer! Our voice matters!

What advice, as an OAR, would you give research teams to support older adult participation?

I would seriously consider using/hiring OARS graduates who can relate with their older adults peers. I believe it will make a difference in getting the older adult populations to participate in clinical trials. Those people (us) desperately need to be able to speak with people who can relate to them – their issues, what they’ve gone through in life, etc.

Interested in the OARS training program and opportunities to participate in research?

Please visit research.cuanschutz.edu/olderadults for more information.

Calendar of Events



Brain Equity Community Education Webinar Series

November 10, 17 &
December 8, 2022
2:00pm-3:00pm MTN

Register to receive webinar link:

medschool.cuanschutz.edu/center-on-aging

Understanding Ways to Maintain Bone and Muscle Mass as Women Age

by Catherine Jankowski, PhD

The title of my clinical trial is “DHEA Augmentation of Musculoskeletal Adaptations to Exercise” (DAMES) and is funded by the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health.



Catherine Jankowski, Ph.D.
Professor College of Nursing
Researcher

DHEA stands for dehydroepiandrosterone. DHEA is a hormone that is produced by the adrenal glands at the top of each kidney. DHEA is released into the blood and has many effects on tissues, such as building muscle and bone. DHEA reaches peak levels in early adulthood and declines thereafter. Only about 10% of the DHEA found in young adults remain in persons sixty or older.

In our prior research, we found that when postmenopausal women took an oral DHEA supplement for 12 months, their bone density increased compared to women who were not taking a supplement. This means that DHEA may help to prevent osteoporosis in women. We, and other scientists, have found that oral DHEA may also increase muscle in postmenopausal women, which is important to prevent loss of muscle mass and function. It is also known that certain

types of exercise, like weightlifting and jumping, help prevent bone loss in postmenopausal women. DHEA may stimulate the building of muscle and bone that occurs when postmenopausal women exercise.

"It is also known that certain types of exercise, like weightlifting and jumping, help prevent bone loss in postmenopausal women."

In the DAMES study, we are studying whether the combination of exercise and DHEA is better than either exercise or DHEA alone in preventing loss of bone and muscle in postmenopausal women with low bone mass.

Low bone mass is an important health problem. An estimated 46% (21 million) older women in the U.S. have low bone mineral density. Low bone mineral density puts them at increased risk for broken bones, physical disability, and death. These women are the focus of our study, because we want to try to minimize further bone loss and avoid risk of fractures in this population. It is also important to test strategies other than drugs to prevent bone loss,

because some women do not tolerate medications or prefer not to take drugs typically prescribed to those at risk of osteoporosis.

"...we are studying whether the combination of exercise and DHEA is better than either exercise or DHEA alone in preventing loss of bone and muscle in postmenopausal women..."

This clinical trial is an example of the type of research that is so needed to understand the aging process and how to support mobility, independence, longevity and quality of life for older adults. Clinical trials are needed to test whether a new drug, device, behavior or therapy is beneficial. The results of clinical trials provide healthcare providers with essential information about effective ways to treat various illnesses or conditions. Clinical trials must include a broad range of ages; we cannot assume that the effects of an intervention tested in younger adults will have the same effect in older adults. When older adults participate in clinical trials, they are helping to inform the healthcare community and general public about the effects of an intervention across a wide age range.



Older adults may not feel like they would qualify for – or are wanted in – research studies. On the other hand, some investigators may use age qualifications without a good scientific reason. In exercise research, older adults may have had limited experience with exercise, so they may feel intimidated or fear injury. In our exercise research group, we’ve seen how capable older adults are in all types of research. The U.S. population has a wide age range and so should the clinical trials that inform the health care of the population. I encourage older adults to consider participating in clinical trials. For more information visit: research.cuanschutz.edu/olderadults