



CHANGING Seasons

VOL. 2 • ISSUE 2 • SPRING '07

New leadership at the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center

Ronald Shorr, M.D., arrived in Gainesville in early January to lead the Institute on Aging’s clinical programs. A board-certified geriatrician and internist, Shorr will assume three roles in his new position — director of the Veterans Affairs Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), associate director of the IOA and professor and chief of the division of geriatric medicine in the department of aging and geriatrics in the College of Medicine.

In his new position, Dr. Shorr will help unite the shared mission of the VA and UF — providing full-service geriatrics care to seniors.

Dr. Shorr, who comes to Gainesville from the department of preventive medicine at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, will use all his skills as he begins his work in his new role.

“I moonlight as a jazz musician,” Dr. Shorr said. “I have learned that you must listen to what the band



Dr. Ronald Shorr, pictured outside the Veterans Affairs GRECC, comes to the UF Institute on Aging to lead its clinical programs.

is already playing in order to make music. So as I approach this position, I’m going to go on a listening tour of the IOA and GRECC.”

New director, continued on page 3

Welcome from IOA Director Marco Pahor

In this issue we focus on the importance of providing specialized geriatric care in our community.

Shands at the University of Florida, in conjunction with the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, has had a long-standing reputation for excellence in providing geriatric care to veterans and community members.

This partnership continues to grow under the aegis of the Institute on Aging. To develop a one-stop opportunity for providing geriatric health

care, UF’s department of aging and geriatrics incorporated UF’s geriatrics division, which was formerly housed in UF’s department of medicine. This restructuring effectively brought together UF and VA students, faculty and clinicians who specialize in providing senior care.

This integration of services addresses one of the fundamental goals of the UF Institute on Aging — to foster the development of a cross-campus system of health care for older people. 🌴

A clinic that cares: UF Senior Care at Tower Hill

UF's Institute on Aging and department of aging and geriatrics are pleased to announce the expansion of the UF Physicians Senior Care at Tower Hill with the addition of geriatricians John Meuleman, M.D., and Kaleeswari Arulselvam, M.D.

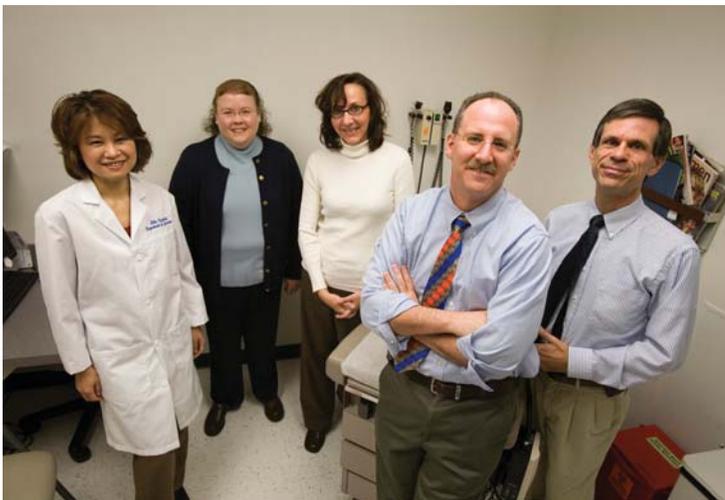


Kaleeswari
Arulselvam, M.D.

The Senior Care clinic offers advanced care from UF physicians who provided specialized health care for seniors. They join Henrique Kallas, MD, Rebecca Beyth, M.D., Miho Bautista, M.D., and April Tilton, PA-C.



Henrique Kallas, M.D.



(l-r) Miho Bautista, MD; April Tilton, PA-C; Rebecca Beyth, MD; Ron Shorr, MD, Division Chief; John Meuleman, MD

The year-old clinic seeks to meet the needs of senior patients and its mission of managing all aspects of their health care. Physicians at UF Senior Care are board-certified in geriatrics and provide quality care for both healthy and frail older adults.

Comprehensive services range from specialty care for incontinence, falls, memory disorders and acute and chronic illnesses to preventive care focused on patient wellness and independence. 🌿

For more information or to arrange an appointment, please call 352-265-0615.

Predictors of Adherence in LIFE

There is national evidence of a decline in physical activity with age and an association between inactivity and increased risk for physical disability. The Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders (LIFE) Pilot is a randomized controlled trial that was designed to examine the feasibility of conducting a large multi-center trial on the effects of increasing physical activity in sedentary, functionally



compromised older adults to delay or prevent the onset of mobility disability. One of the objectives was to examine predictors of adherence to physical activity.

The community setting for the pilot included institution-based and home-based physical activity for 213 men (31.1%) and women (68.9%) with an average age of 76.5 years who were at risk for disability. Adherence to physical activity interventions was not related to differences in demographic profiles. Similarly, there was not strong, consistent evidence that adherence is related to comorbidities, level of physical functioning, physical symptoms, or even cognitive processes related to functioning and physical activity that exist prior to the onset of an intervention.

The results were heartening in that the physical activity intervention appears to have been well tolerated by diverse groups of older adults. The role of prior behavior in predicting later adherence to the program underscores the importance of anticipating it and developing advance interventions for its treat. 🌿

Educational activities at the VA GRECC

So health-care providers can better care for their patients and seniors can better understand the aging process, the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center at the VA joins with the University of Florida's College of Medicine and the Institute on Aging to provide various educational activities.

The courses, lectures and other educational offerings target different audiences in three general areas: (1) career development of younger clinicians and researchers, (2) training of health-care providers and (3) outreach activities in the community.

To enhance development of research, clinical and leadership skills among students, trainees and fellows, UF and the GRECC provides a two-week geriatric clerkship for fourth-year medical students, weekly seminars, workshops on writing grants and manuscripts, among other topics.

Educational offerings for faculty and staff include two weekly interdisciplinary aging seminar series focused on research and clinical topics. Special education events such as the Whittington Lecture series, educational workshops and regional/national conferences on geriatrics take place throughout the year.

For older adults, the GRECC initiates health campaigns to educate the public about health strategies to reduce the risk of stroke and produces videos to empower patients to manage their conditions. 🌱

Giving for a healthier, more independent tomorrow

Good health and independence make for quality living, especially as we age. The University of Florida is committed to leading in research, education and patient care through the Institute on Aging.

You can invest in a healthier and more independent future for you and your loved ones by investing in the Institute on Aging. Your support educates future geriatricians and health-care providers for older people, generates critical resources for our world-class faculty to conduct cutting-edge research and creates a legacy for UF to remain a leader in providing a healthier and more fulfilling tomorrow for us all.

For information on making a gift, please contact Troy Munn, director of development for the Institute on Aging, at 352-265-7227, 888-374-2867 or tmunn@aging.ufl.edu. 🌱

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The Veterans Health Administration initiated a strategy in the mid-1970s to focus attention on the aging veteran population, to increase the basic knowledge of aging, to transfer that knowledge to health-care providers and to improve the quality of senior care. A cornerstone of this strategy has been the development of GRECCs. Gainesville has one of 21 centers of excellence currently operating in the nation.

The Institute on Aging's three-part mission also involves patient care, education and research. One of the key components for enacting this mission comes from its relationship with the GRECC.

The work of the IOA naturally lends itself to the mission of the GRECC and vice versa, Shorr said. He said his goal for the GRECC is to help translate

some of the more mechanistic research findings that come out of the Institute on Aging so they can be applied to patients.

"A guy like me can take that research and translate it to apply to the care of our patients with problems like frailty, which is one problem we deal with that is linked to aging," Dr. Shorr said.

Dr. Shorr will also oversee the IOA's clinical operations, including the geriatricians at the UF Physicians Senior Care of Tower Hill clinic.

Dr. Shorr holds a master's degree in epidemiology. His research interests include the appropriate use and adverse effects of medications in older adults. He is currently the principal investigator of an NIH grant to test whether proximity alarms reduce fall risk in acute care. 🌱

Ask the Doctor



George J. Caranasos, M.D.
professor emeritus,
University of Florida

**Q: Dear Dr. Caranasos,
Why should I see a geriatrician?**

A: Although aging is not a disease, the longer we live, the greater our chances of developing health problems. A geriatrician is specially trained to treat these unique and complex issues, including the psychological and social aspects of illness in the elderly and how it affects the entire family.

Geriatricians have specialized training for medical conditions without a clear-cut cause that are common in the elderly, such as incontinence, poor mobility, recurrent falls, decreased ability to care for oneself and poor functioning.

A geriatrician can recognize these conditions and potential problems, simplify medication regimens and



coordinate care, and is uniquely qualified to evaluate and treat patients as a whole.

A geriatrician can be of special value when there are “multiples” — multiple medical problems, multiple doctors, multiple medicines. When patients take many medications simultaneously, known as “polypharmacy,” they can experience adverse drug effects and harmful drug interactions. The combined effects of the drugs can frequently mimic problems seen in older patients such as poor appetite, weight loss, slowing down, forgetfulness, confusion, depression, anxiety and constipation.

Geriatricians are also trained to use a team approach to care, which incorporates the work of nurses, dietitians, psychologists and physical and occupational therapists to care for the whole person. 🌴

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