

MIND Matters

SUMMER 2020

SPECIAL FEATURE

UCI MIND remains home to OC's only NIH-funded Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

Led by Dr. Frank LaFerla, dean of the UCI School of Biological Sciences and director of the UCI Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, a multidisciplinary team of UCI MIND investigators has successfully been awarded a five-year, \$14.4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to sustain critical research and education as Orange County's only Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). The NIH funds only 32 of these centers at major medical institutions across the United States.

"Our research team brings passionate and novel cross-disciplinary approaches to try to solve this insidious disease. We collaborate with colleagues across the nation, and we provide critical resources to the community," says Dean LaFerla.

continued on page 3

Honoring the retirement of Dr. Malcolm Dick



Dr. Malcolm Dick with a research participant

After 36 years of research, mentorship, and service, UCI MIND bids a grateful farewell to senior neuropsychologist, Malcolm Dick, PhD, who will begin retirement this fall. During his tenure with UCI MIND, Dr. Dick conducted neuropsychological and cognitive assessments with over 10,000 participants as part of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center longitudinal study and the California Alzheimer's Disease Center program.

continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

UCI MIND remains home to OC's only NIH-funded Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

Honoring the retirement of Dr. Malcolm Dick

RAMP-ing up Alzheimer's training for medical students

***A December to Remember* is going virtual!**

UCI MIND launches new preclinical Alzheimer's disease trial: AHEAD 3-45

Caregiver stress during COVID-19



Dear Friends of UCI MIND,

Summer of 2020 has been unlike any summer before. We are all struggling to adjust to life amid a global pandemic that has been upending our lives for several months. Many of us have been unable to see our loved ones, others have lost our treasured family members. At the end of this newsletter, we offer some guidance from the Centers for Disease Control for caregivers of people living with dementia (p. 7).

Despite COVID-19, the work of UCI MIND continues. This includes important milestones. Most notably, the NIH selected UCI MIND to remain a member of the federal Alzheimer's Disease Research Center network (p. 1, 3). We also started a new mentorship program to inspire medical students to join the fight against Alzheimer's and other dementias (p. 4). And many research studies are set to begin soon, including a major new prevention trial, the AHEAD Study (p. 6).

Life after UCI MIND will begin for Dr. Malcolm Dick, who will begin retirement this fall (p. 1, 3). Dr. Dick's contribution to UCI MIND cannot be overstated. He has been a trusted source of clinical and research expertise for thousands in Orange County.

It is unclear when life will return to normal, or what the new normal will entail. For the time being, our events such as our annual research conference (p. 8) and gala (p. 5) will go virtual. But we are eager to see all members of the UCI MIND community in person again through research visits, community outreach, and other events as soon as is safely possible.



Joshua D. Grill

Joshua D. Grill, PhD

Director, UCI MIND

Faculty members

Anatomy & Neurobiology

Aileen Anderson, PhD
Tallie Baram, MD, PhD
Christine Gall, PhD, Chair
Alan Goldin, MD, PhD
Kei Igarashi, PhD
Gary Lynch, PhD
Steven Schreiber, MD
John Weiss, MD, PhD
Xiangmin Xu, PhD

Biomedical Engineering

Gregory Brewer, PhD

Chemistry

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Carl Cotman, PhD
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Kim Green, PhD
Joshua Grill, PhD
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Frank LaFerla, PhD, Dean
Michael Leon, PhD
Craig Stark, PhD
Vivek Swarup, PhD
Leslie Thompson, PhD
Marcelo Wood, PhD, Chair
Michael Yassa, PhD

Neurology

Tallie Baram, MD, PhD
Maria Corrada, ScD
Carl Cotman, PhD

Neurology (continued)

David Cribbs, PhD
Malcolm Dick, PhD
Mark Fisher, MD
Lisa Flanagan, PhD
Claudia Kawas, MD
Ira Lott, MD
Mark Mapstone, PhD
Tahseen Mozaffar, MD, Int. Chair
S. Ahmad Sajjadi, MD, PhD
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Gaby Thai, MD
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Daniel Nation, PhD

Radiation Oncology

Charles Limoli, PhD

Statistics

Daniel Gillen, PhD, Chair
Bin Nan, PhD

This marks the eighth time that UCI MIND has earned the competitive five-year award from the NIH. UCI was one of the original six centers funded by the NIH, initially in a combined center with USC. Founding director Dr. Carl Cotman led the effort at UCI, including its transition to an independent center in 2000. Dr. LaFerla took the reins in 2009 and has overseen major growth of the ADRC in the past 10 years.

This growth includes the recent award. The new NIH grant funds 10 collaborative "cores", each with a unique focus and led by a different UCI MIND faculty member (below). Three new cores were added in the current cycle, a biomarker core and two special populations cores, reinforcing UCI's longstanding leadership in research with people with Down syndrome and people age 90 years and older. The new grant will also signal the start of a new research education component, which aims to train the next generation of researchers and clinicians through novel programs (p. 4).

Collaborative cores:



continued from page 1: Honoring the retirement of Dr. Malcolm Dick

Patients and families have long revered Dr. Dick for his professional, compassionate nature when delivering challenging diagnoses. His colleagues and over 80 psychology trainees have equally admired his mentorship in providing unparalleled attention and care to each participant with whom he interacted.

Originally slated for an early summer retirement, Dr. Dick has selflessly volunteered to see UCI MIND through the current challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and to aid the transition to two new neuropsychologists, Maria Corona, PhD (right, above) and Michelle McDonnell, PhD (right, below), who will begin with UCI MIND in the early fall. Dr. Dick's dedication to participants, families, and trainees has contributed significantly to the continued success of UCI MIND over the past three decades. In honor of his retirement, friends of UCI MIND are creating the Malcolm B. Dick Endowment to support education and training for early-career clinical researchers. **To donate to this fund, click here or visit <https://zotfunder.give.uci.edu/project/21770>.**





RAMP-ing up Alzheimer's training for medical students

In partnership with UCI School of Medicine, UCI MIND launched a new Research And Mentorship Program (RAMP) for medical students this summer. The program, made possible by support from community philanthropist Dr. Lorna Carlin and the nonprofit HFC led by Seth Rogen and Lauren Miller Rogen, pairs medical students with UCI MIND faculty mentors to inspire scientific ideas and future careers in dementia research and care. As the field presently grapples with a serious shortage of geriatric healthcare professionals, this program aims to create a pipeline of enthusiastic trainees who, motivated by their experiences and mentorship, choose medical careers to advance knowledge and care for older adults. Three talented students have been selected for the inaugural summer program and projects are already underway:



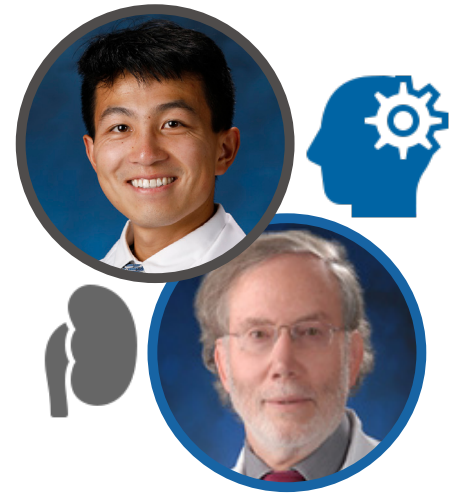
HFC founders, Lauren Miller Rogen and Seth Rogen virtually congratulated UCI MIND RAMP inaugural trainees



Raumin Neville is working with UCI MIND faculty mentor **Claudia Kawas, MD**, professor of neurology and neurobiology and behavior, to study the relationship between cognitive functioning and neuropathology among people aged 100 and older, or centenarians.



Catriona Lewis is working with UCI MIND faculty mentor **David Sultzer, MD**, professor of psychiatry and human behavior, to evaluate the relationships between beta amyloid accumulation in the brain and mood/anxiety symptoms in asymptomatic older adults at risk for Alzheimer's disease.



Eric Han is working with UCI MIND faculty mentor **Mark Fisher, MD**, professor of neurology, to study the relationship between cognitive decline, cerebral microvascular disease, and uremic toxins (compounds usually filtered and excreted by the kidneys) among patients with chronic kidney disease.

The students will present their projects to colleagues at the conclusion of the program and have the opportunity to publish results in peer-reviewed journals to be shared with Alzheimer's and dementia researchers worldwide. For more information about UCI MIND RAMP or questions on how to help sustain it, please contact Daniel Harper at ddharper@uci.edu.

A December to Remember is going virtual!

UCI MIND's 11th Annual Gala, *A December to Remember*, will transition to an exciting virtual experience this year on Saturday, December 5th. Mark your calendar for livestreamed entertainment, online auction items, and a memorable night at home with your family and friends, all in support of local Alzheimer's disease research.

For more information and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Linda Scheck at **949.824.3251** or **LScheck@uci.edu**.



Thank you to our donors



To make a gift, call **949.824.3793** or visit www.mind.uci.edu/donate

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UCI MIND launches new preclinical Alzheimer's disease trial: AHEAD 3-45

AHEAD STUDY

Worldwide, nearly 50 million people have dementia and the cases are expected to triple in the coming decades unless researchers discover effective preventions or disease-delaying therapies. With this backdrop, UCI MIND, as a member of the NIH-funded Alzheimer's Clinical Trials Consortium (ACTC), is launching a new trial in preclinical Alzheimer's disease—a proposed stage of disease that comes before memory problems begin.

The AHEAD 3-45 Study is a global multicenter clinical trial aimed at preventing memory loss due to Alzheimer's disease.

The study, designed and conducted by ACTC, is funded through a public-private partnership with the National Institute on Aging, Eisai, and several philanthropic organizations.

As one of approximately 100 sites worldwide selected to conduct the study, UCI MIND will enroll cognitively healthy adults ages 55-80 who have evidence of brain beta amyloid to test whether an investigational drug called BAN2401 can prevent the onset of memory problems due to Alzheimer's disease. BAN2401 is an antibody that has been shown in people with Alzheimer's disease to bind to amyloid and remove it from the brain, which scientists hypothesize may

be able to delay or prevent symptoms of Alzheimer's disease in those who are at increased risk based on the presence of amyloid in the brain.

This four-year clinical trial is unique in its design in that it will enroll two types of participants: those with elevated levels of amyloid and those with slightly lower intermediate levels of amyloid as evidenced by a positron emission tomography (PET) scan. The elevated group will enroll in the A45 study to be randomized to receive BAN2401 or placebo via intravenous infusions every two weeks for two years and then every four weeks for the remaining two years. The intermediate group will enroll in the A3 study to be randomized similarly to receive BAN2401 or placebo, but infusions will occur every four weeks throughout the study duration.

Volunteer participation in these trials is critical. A major emphasis in the AHEAD Study is to enroll a diverse population that is representative of the nation and of Alzheimer's disease—which affects every racial and ethnic group.

To learn more about qualifying for a clinical trial or other studies at UCI, visit c2c.uci.edu or call (949) 824-0008.

Caregiver stress during COVID-19

Caring for a loved one with dementia can feel stressful and isolating. Add a pandemic on top of it, and these feelings can quickly multiply with the responsibilities of protecting your loved one and yourself from getting sick. The good news is that you are not alone and there are resources to help you navigate these additional stressors so you and

your family can stay as safe as possible during a time that can feel impossible. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are important steps caregivers can take during and after a public health emergency to help manage and cope with stress. Here are some tips from the CDC on how to take care of yourself:



Eat a healthy diet, avoid using drugs and alcohol, and get plenty of sleep and exercise.

Simple activities, such as walking, stretching, and deep breathing can help relieve stress. Choose plant-based foods, whole grains, healthy fats, fish and reduce intake of red meat, sugar, and processed foods.



Establish and maintain a routine.

Try to develop a sleep schedule, eat meals, and exercise at consistent times each day, if possible.



Make time to unwind.

Incorporate a fun or positive activity into your routine to have something to look forward to each day or week.



Take breaks from news stories.

Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. If you want to stay up-to-date, visit the CDC website for the latest research and recommendations:
www.cdc.gov



Connect with others.

Call family and friends. Talking to someone you trust about your concerns and feelings can help.



Have a backup caregiver.

If possible, have someone who can step in if you become sick to ensure that your loved one continues to receive care. Then, you can focus on caring for yourself.



Find a support group.

Support groups can provide a safe space for you to find comfort in knowing you are not alone. Phone numbers for local virtual caregiver support groups are listed on the back page.



Call your healthcare provider.

If stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row, seek help from a trusted healthcare provider or call a mental health support hotline like those listed on the back page.



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Giving Opportunities

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Research Participation

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research@mind.uci.edu



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on social media!

OC COVID-19 RESOURCES

ASSIST Program for Isolated Seniors

UC Irvine | 714.497.0315

Virtual Caregiver Support Groups

Alzheimer's Association | 800.272.3900
Alzheimer's OC | 844.435.7259

Food, Housing, Financial Support

211OC | Call 211 or Text Zip Code to 898-211

In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Hotline

OC Social Services Agency | 714.825.3000 (Dial 4)

Mental Health Support

NAMI Warm Line | 877.910.9276
New Hope Crisis Hotline | 714.639.4673



For more resources, visit
www.mind.uci.edu/blog



Upcoming
events

Don't forget to
register for our FREE
virtual conference!



31st Annual SoCal Alzheimer's Research Conference *Tackling Dementia with Technology*

Thursday, September 10, 2020 | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm PST
FREE Virtual Event | Register: conference.mind.uci.edu

11th Annual A December to Remember Gala

Saturday, December 5, 2020
FREE Virtual Event | Save the Date!

2020 Facebook LIVE Q&A Series

Guest experts from UCI MIND

Monthly | 11:00 - 11:30 am PST
Facebook: facebook.com/ucirvinemind



Learn more about our upcoming
events at www.mind.uci.edu/calendar