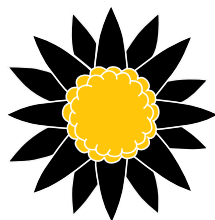


The HBEC encourages older African Americans to participate in research with the goal of addressing health disparities



HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER

SPRING 2024

Connecting Older Adults to Research



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Research is critical to understanding why African Americans are at much higher risk of developing certain diseases, and why these diseases have a greater impact on their health and longevity. If you agree to be part of the Participant Resource Pool (PRP), we guarantee that:

- The research projects meet the highest quality federal, state and university standards.

- Your information will be handled with the strictest confidence.

- You will be considered for research that is of interest to you.

- You have the right to decline a research project for any reason at any time.

If interested, contact Vanessa Rorai, HBEC Program Coordinator and editor of this publication at 313-664-2604.



Unlocking the Potential of Artificial Intelligence in Disease-Based Research

*by Sarah Haque
WSU Neuroscience Undergraduate*

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has stirred mixed reactions among Americans. According to a Pew Research Center study, 45% of respondents were equally concerned and excited about AI, with those concerned expressing fear of unemployment and privacy risks.

Artificial techniques such as deep learning (a method in which computers are taught to process data in a manner inspired by the

human brain) are being newly utilized in research. This made me ponder: to what extent can AI-based techniques be used to detect and diagnose disease? A scientific article sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) explores the potential of deep learning in detecting the early onset of Alzheimer's by analyzing MRI scans to detect physiological markers and patterns indicative of Alzheimer disease pathology.

To understand the progress of AI, I interviewed Dr. Dongziao

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New MCUAAAR Scientists Study Digital Divide, Music and Language

Each year MCUAAAR selects exceptional minority researchers, or researchers working with minority populations, to receive funding and mentorship for their research projects. Congratulations to the 2023-2024 MCUAAAR scientist winners!



Carrie Leach, PhD
Research
Assistant Professor
Institute of
Gerontology, WSU

Project: *Toward Bridging the Divide: Exploring the Communication Dynamics that Contribute to Older African Americans' Health Inequities in an Urban Digitally Disconnected City*



Myles Durkee, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of
Psychology, WSU

Project: *Racial Code-Switching: Unmasking Psychological Implications Across the Lifespan*



J. Lloyd Allen, PhD
Assistant Professor
School of Social
Work, WSU

Project: *Rap & Relax: A Qualitative Study Exploring Black Men's Reality using Hip-Hop Based Discussions*

AI from page 1

Zhu, director of the WSU AI research team for biomedical informatics. His current project uses AI to detect the vulnerability of children to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus 2 (SARS-COV2) infection. They created AI-based models to detect common bioindicators of children contracting SARS-COV2 using a portable, mobile system that generates a "risk score" which assesses the sensitivity of a child in contracting the Covid variant. This process has had positive results in the early recognition and detection of the virus and current results will soon be presented to the NIH for more investigation. Despite this innovation, Dr. Zhu warns that AI itself cannot be fully relied upon to manage programs without human interference. Ethical and security issues such as "jailbreaking" (when malicious codes

are introduced into an AI model's system to release restricted information), can harm the validity and transparency of research.

Sophie Hanna, a graduate research assistant in the the Electra Lab, agrees that AI programming can be beneficial for tedious data collection and recruitment processes, but it can't beat the skills and professionalism of a human researcher. The ELECTRA Lab wants to create an affordable and accessible device that can detect neurodegenerative disease in older African Americans. The team uses neuropsychological testing and an EEG (sensors that record the electrical activity of the brain) to gather data on the cognitive state of the brain. Data collection for the study is ongoing; it requires a meticulousness that only humans can provide. Since the study is based upon an already vulnerable population, potential data breach-

es from AI use could lead to violation of patient rights and equity issues.

AI should be seen as a tool to enhance current research. As noted, AI can be used to track the diagnostics of diseases, but it should not be solely relied upon and there needs to be consistent interaction between the machine-learning algorithms and the programmer to safeguard against any irregularities. Should there be more implementation of AI-techniques in research? I think due to the major impact incurable diseases have on the standards of living for older adults, AI could be a practical tool in developing a faster therapeutic approach. However, current AI-based research needs more refinement.



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION



Successful Aging thru Financial Empowerment

Check Fraud Surges: Washing Away Savings

by LaToya Hall, MSW
SAFE Program Director

Check fraud is on a rapid rise. In 2022 there were almost 700,000 cases of reported check fraud, up from approximately 350,000 the year before. This has put banks on high alert, however many of the criminals involved manage to disappear without any consequences. Although check fraud is a general term that explains a wide array of criminal activities involving checks, we'll discuss the two that impact consumers the most.

One form of check fraud occurs when criminals steal checks from the mail or trash. Criminals sometimes steal mail out of US postal boxes, looking for anything that appears to be a bill payment, or a check being mailed. Once the criminals have the paper checks in hand, they use a method called check washing to extract the money. A special solvent is used to erase the ink on the check and then the dollar amount and recipient information is replaced.

Another form of check fraud is receiving fraudulent checks from scammers that they cash at their banks and then send the

fraudsters part of the funds. The counterfeiters create the checks using high-quality printers and special paper, so they look very realistic. Consumers are told to keep some of the money but to send a majority of the funds

back to the scammers. The checks are later found by the bank to be fraudulent and the funds are reversed, leaving the consumer's account in overdraft. The money they send the fraudsters is rarely if ever recovered.

Tips for keeping yourself SAFE



Don't mail checks if you don't have to. Try to pay bills in person or online.



If you must mail a check, **do not** put it in your residential mailbox and raise the flag to notify the postman. This is an open invitation to thieves to steal it.



Drop off checks inside a post office or official USPS collection box if you can.



Use direct deposit for monies being paid to you.



If you write a check, use a special **gel pen** that is impossible to wash off. Check the pen description to make sure you find the right type.



Never agree to cash a check and give a portion back to the sender.



For questions or further assistance, please contact **LaToya Hall** at **313-664-2608** or **L.hall@wayne.edu**

Step Safely into Spring: Fall Prevention Strategies

by Michelle Renaud, MS
Kinesiology Doctoral Student, WSU

As we age, falls become a common and serious welfare concern. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 14 million US adults over age 65 fall each year. One in five falls results in severe injuries including head trauma or broken bones. The negative consequences can extend beyond the physical to impact mental health and the ability to engage in activities of daily living, which can lessen independence and quality of life.

Here are a few tips to maintain balance, prevent falls, and support overall wellness:

Exercise: Establishing a consistent fitness routine as you are able can significantly reduce the risk of falling. Choose functional movements that enhance muscular strength, flexibility, and balance like walking, yoga, or Tai Chi. Before beginning any exercise program, please consult with a physician to determine if it is safe and appropriate for your current health status.

Home Safety: Frequent environmental assessments and modifications are critical to prevent falls. Simple home adjustments, like removing tripping hazards (area rugs, extension cords, floor clutter, etc.), updating interior and exterior lighting, installing bathroom grab bars, and ensuring stair handrails are secure can create safer living spaces. Also check before you

step, to ensure shoes are tied and the path is clear!

Medication: Certain pharmacological agents can cause dizziness or drowsiness, which can affect gait stability. Ask your primary care provider and pharmacist to regularly review medication side effects and discuss adjustments as needed.

Vision Screening: Vision changes are a natural part of aging and can include decreased depth perception or difficulty in distinguishing contrasts, increasing the risk of falls. We also need more light to see clearly as we age. Annual eye exams are vital to determine the need for corrective lenses and treat eye conditions to improve visual acuity.

Education: Fall prevention education is useful for older adults and caregiver. Learning about risk factors, the importance of check-ups, and effective safety strategies can empower all of us to take an active role in our health.

Indoor

- Pets
- Toys
- Rugs
- Stairs
- Shoes
- Slippery Floors
- Extension Cords

Outdoor

- Curbs
- Gravel
- Tall Grass
- Tree Roots
- Water Hoses
- Garden Tools
- Uneven Terrain
- Sidewalk Cracks

Tripping Hazards

Check before you step! Falls can happen when you least expect it. Always assess your environment to ensure that your path is safe.

M. Renaud

Actively Recruiting Research Studies



The following list contains studies looking for participants. All have been reviewed and approved by the HBEC Community Advisory Board.

The WISDOM Study

This study is working to improve breast cancer detection and prevention for all women. Participants have the option to learn their genetic risk of getting breast cancer, receive recommendations for when and how often to get screened, and learn strategies to reduce their breast cancer risk. Participation takes less than one hour a year and can be done almost entirely online. Looking for women aged 40 to 74 who have never had breast cancer.

Sign up or learn more at www.thewisdomstudy.org or call 855-729-2844

The Detroit VIP Study

In this study, we are interviewing Black older adults (at least 55 years old) in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb County who currently do volunteer work or want to do volunteer work in the near future. This project will include a 5-minute questionnaire and a one-hour interview. Study completed via zoom or telephone. Participants will be compensated.

Contact Erika Karoll at karoller@wayne.edu or 313-389-6491.

Supporting Caregivers of People with Dementia

Family caregivers are needed for a study that can be completed at home, online or in person at Wayne State University. Study entails participating in up to 3-4 focus groups or interviews. All participants will receive a gift card.

Contact Rosanne DiZazzo-Miller at ar7975@wayne.edu or 313-993-3970

ELECTRA Study

This research seeks to improve the way we diagnose Alzheimer's Disease in Black and African American adults by using electroencephalogram (EEG) and computerized assessment. Must be 65+ years old (among other criteria). Those who complete the in-person visits will be compensated.

Contact the ELECTRA Study Team at ELECTRA@wayne.edu or 313-577-1692

SWELCare Study

This project seeks volunteers who are Black or White living with and helping a family member or friend who has Alzheimer's or related dementia. Participants must be Michigan residents. Study participation for the family member/friend includes completing a phone interview, training session, and completing daily life assessments for 5 days. Participation for the person living with dementia includes completing a memory screener, training session by phone or Zoom, and wearing a heart monitor for 5 days.

Contact the team at swelcarestudy@umich.edu or 734-936-7489

Enhancing Digital CBT-I to Improve Adherence and Reduce Disparities

This project seeks to understand how different people interact with internet-based treatment for insomnia. This study lasts 8 weeks and requires participants to go through 20-minute long weekly sessions of digital therapy for insomnia. Looking for those aged 18+ who have difficulty sleeping or insomnia.

Contact the team at abayone1@hfhs.org or call 248-344-4159

Michigan Men's Diabetes Project 2

Looking for older African American men with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM). This study aims to adapt and refine a diabetes self-management support intervention and will then conduct a randomized control trial of the adapted intervention. This study will utilize data from in-depth interviews and anthropometric, clinical, and survey measures.

Contact Srijani Sengupta at srijseng@umich.edu

SuperAging Research Initiative

What contributes to excellent memory in older age? We need your help to find out! You may be eligible if you are: aged 80 or over, cognitively healthy and actively engaged in life, and fluent in English. The study involves visiting our Center every 2 years, memory tests, surveys, blood collection, and MRI brain scan (if eligible).

Contact us at SuperagingUM@med.umich.edu or 734-764-6157



Satellite image of the Detroit River, the light-colored bands coming in on the right side are pollution. Belle Isle is in the center of the image.

Service and Climate Change

by Wilma Stringer
Community Advisory Board Member

Community service is an excellent way to learn about communities other than one's own. Whether it is working with people planting trees and cleaning up rivers or attending municipal public meetings with people fighting for cleaner air and water, it becomes apparent that a variety of people from different backgrounds are working together to mitigate the effects of climate change and to transform the human relationship to the world.

Before taking Introduction to Environmental Science at Wayne State University, which I highly recommend, I thought I had a basic understanding of the major issues related to climate change. I was wrong. I was wrong to think I understood the issues and I was wrong to think I did not need more education. Addressing climate change requires a range of knowledge from chemistry to decision-making to how to grow a garden.

The activities I participated in during the course ranged from distributing food at a neighborhood church to attending a National Academies webinar on global weather forecasting. At these events people had a sense that no matter their specific concerns, climate change had to be at the forefront of their thinking and planning. At the food distribution in the church parking lot, people were commenting on the difference between current weather and how they remembered it in past years, attributing that difference to climate change. I think this emerging acceptance of the reality of the changing climate by a broad cross section of people may help fuel a larger movement for the fundamental structural changes needed to insure the survival of life on this planet.

Critical Crossroads is presented by HBEC Community Advisory Board members to engage in community conversations, advocacy, and strategies around issues of social injustice.

HBEC in the Community

*Do you know
of an upcoming
community
event that we
can participate
in as a resource
table?*

Give us a call!

We're always looking for opportunities in the Metro Detroit area to share information about our program. We attend health fairs, church events, and more.



Please call
Amanda Horn
at
313-664-2616.

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY



If you have any questions, contact us at
313-664-2616

Lunch & Learns



All events are free and open to the public

VIRTUAL EVENT

3 WAYS TO JOIN US >

Thursday, February 29 at 11 am – 12:30 pm

Housing America's Older Adults

Research shows that housing plays an influential component in our overall health. A deeper look at this growing issue sheds light on numerous disparities faced by existing homeowners and renters, specifically older adults. Dr. Jennifer Molinsky will share the latest housing report from the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

TO JOIN BY COMPUTER OR TABLET

Type "<https://bit.ly/HBECLL>" into your internet browser.

"HBECLL" must be uppercase.

JOIN BY PHONE

1-309-205-3325

Meeting ID:

996 0266 9530

Passcode: 135291

OR SCAN
THIS
QR CODE



IN-PERSON ONLY EVENTS

- Begin at 10:30 am
- Presentations start at 11 am
- End at 1:00 pm

YOU MUST RSVP to secure your spot! Call **313-664-2616** to leave a message with your **name, phone number,** and the date of event(s) you plan to attend.

You will receive an **RSVP confirmation call** and a reminder call several days prior to event.

Thursday, March 28, 10:30 - 1 pm

Getting Your Affairs in Order

LOCATION: Rising Star Missionary Church,
STAR Community Center

11555 Whittier Ave, Detroit MI 48224

Preparing for certain life events can be challenging and overwhelming to navigate on our own. From healthcare management to finances, there can be a tremendous amount of paperwork and literature to traverse. Join us as we discuss resources, helpful tips for getting your affairs in order, and how to avoid common mistakes.

Wednesday, April 24, 10:30 - 1 pm

Food as Medicine

LOCATION: Detroit Unity Temple

17505 2nd Ave, Detroit MI 48203

Nutrition is a powerful tool for maintaining and enhancing our health journey! How do we determine the difference between helpful ingredients and those that may not be as nutritionally sound? Join us as we explore how to better understand food labels and how we can use the power of food as a component of our overall health.

Thursday, May 23, 10:30 - 1 pm

Brain Health & Aging

LOCATION: Greater Grace Temple
23500 W 7 Mile Rd, Detroit MI 48219

The brain is the control center of our bodies and because of that it needs the right kind of care to keep functioning at peak performance. But it can be challenging to navigate existing resources for yourself or the person you care for, especially if they have dementia or Alzheimer's. Join us for a conversation about brain health and useful tools and resources.

Thursday, June 20, 10:30 - 1 pm

Elevate Your Voice: Voter Preparedness

LOCATION: Highland Park Recreation Center

10 Pitkin St. Highland Park MI 48203

Voting and community representation are increasingly important! As we approach the upcoming election season, it is a great time to reflect on recent district changes and be aware of what to expect as you head to the polls. Join us for a discussion on how to ensure your voice is heard this election and how to be prepared as a responsible voter.



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**HBEC SPRING 2024
 NEWSLETTER**



**Wayne State University
 Board of Governors**

Mark Gaffney, Chair
 Danielle Atkinson
 Bryan Barnhill II
 Michael Busuito
 Marilyn Kelly
 Anil Kumar
 Terri Lynn Land
 Shirley Stancato
 Kimberly Andrews Espy, PhD, *ex officio*

Tripping Hazards

CAB Critical CROSSROADS

**Our Nation's Democracy is at a Critical Crossroad
 Older Adults Taking Action and Leading Community Engagement**

Dr. Tam Perry, Community Liaison Recruitment Core Co-Leader
 Vanessa Rorai, Healthier Black Elders Center Program Coordinator
 Wilma Stringer, Healthier Black Elders Center Community Advisory Board Member
 Henry Swift, Healthier Black Elders Center Community Advisory Board Member
 James Bridgforth, Healthier Black Elders Center Community Advisory Board Member
 Patricia Mullin, Healthier Black Elders Center Community Advisory Board Member

Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting

WINTER 2024

Lunch & Learns

Left to right: Tam Perry, Henry Swift and Vanessa Rorai prior to their *Critical Crossroads* symposium presentation at the November 2023 Gerontological Society of America Annual scientific meeting in Tampa, Florida.

SAFE

The Healthier Black Elders Center is part of the Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University, Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research: A National Institute on Aging Grant Program