



We established the University of Maryland Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center for Research on Aging (UM-OAIC) over a decade ago to investigate innovative ways to maintain or restore independence in older adults with chronic disease. In September 2006, the University received a five-year \$6 million renewal award from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) to continue the work of the Center. This award provides funding for collaborative, interdisciplinary research in aging and rehabilitation. It also provides our investigators with pilot and exploratory grant funding for projects related to the Center's foci, and training opportunities for young investigators in the field of gerontology.

The Center's mission is to conduct mechanistic and outcomes-based research that emphasizes exercise rehabilitation and to provide research training in gerontology and geriatrics that will improve the lifestyle, functionality and recovery of older Americans with stroke, hip fracture or chronic diseases associated with aging. Our ultimate goal is to translate our research findings and evaluate the effectiveness of clinical rehabilitation and community programs for older adults living with a disability. These strategies are based on the premise that recovery of physical function in disabled older people requires a multidisciplinary and integrated approach targeted to the deficits identified through careful scientific investigation.

Along with our continued collaborations with the Baltimore VA Medical Center, this prestigious award will allow the University of Maryland Baltimore to maintain its status as national leader in research in aging. Our findings over the last decade show that exercise rehabilitation can enhance the functional capacity, ambulation and the well being of older people living with stroke, heart failure and peripheral arterial occlusive disease. In the renewal, the UM-OAIC will be organized into five core research areas: clinical & translational research methods; neuromotor function; applied clinical physiology; muscle biology & molecular mechanisms of inflammation; and biostatistics & informatics. These core areas will support other NIH-funded research projects focused on stroke, hip fracture, and other disabling chronic diseases including exercise and weight loss programs in the treatment of obesity and type 2 diabetes. We also plan to develop a series of clinical and laboratory tests to precisely characterize disability in large samples of older adults to determine the biological mechanisms underlying physical and functional impairments. These findings will be translated into customized rehabilitation programs that target the functional and physiological mechanisms causing disability.

The UM-OAIC investigators and research facilities are based in the University of Maryland School of Medicine's Departments of Medicine, Neurology, Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Sciences, Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine, the Baltimore VA Medical Center's Geriatric Research, Educational and Clinical Center and the Johns Hopkins Medical Center Department of Neurology and Kirby Brain Imaging Institute. Since establishing the Center, we have developed strong research collaborations with scientists in the Hertie Brain Research Institute in Germany, the Neumann Robotics Engineering Facility at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the National Institutes of Health's Physical Disabilities Branch and National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research. Our Center will continue to expand the applicability of its multidisciplinary research program in rehabilitation and restorative research through the conduct of translational basic science and clinical research from the bench to the

bedside, and into the community. We are confident that the strong, collaborative research team and resources provided by the NIA will lead to novel rehabilitation strategies that will improve the physical function and lifestyle of older Americans living with disability.

You can obtain more information about our clinical, research, and educational programs through links with other collaborating centers and programs in gerontology at University of Maryland, Baltimore including the GRECC, Center for Research on Aging, the Baltimore Hip Studies and the Gerontology Geriatrics Education and Research program (GGEAR).

Sincerely,



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