

October 2023 Newsletter

A Note from the Director

Dear colleagues and friends,

I'm delighted to share the latest from the Center for Healthy Aging as we reach the midpoint of the Fall '23 semester.

First, please join me in extending a warm welcome to our new Center faculty member, Assistant Professor [Niccole Nelson](#), who brings valuable expertise from her time at the University of Notre Dame and research interests focusing on real-time stress, emotional processes, and long-term health in older adults.

We're also thrilled to introduce our inaugural Center for Healthy Aging student [ambassadors](#), Rachel Washburn and Brooke Zarecki, who will play key roles in

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Development and Family Studies. A warm welcome to all of our new team!

In the world of research, Ph.D.-candidate Michelle Matter and Associate Professor Meara Faw have [published a paper](#) about informal care partners of people with dementia, while Associate Professor Aga Burzynska explores the link between metabolic syndrome, adiposity, and cognitive function. Our dedicated researchers are also actively recruiting participants for several brain health research studies – more info below.

As we move forward, we invite you to join us for upcoming [community events](#), including Tour Tuesdays at the Center and co-sponsored healthy aging lectures with UCHealth's Aspen Club.

Your steadfast support empowers CSU's Center for Healthy Aging, and together, we'll forge new frontiers in the field of healthy aging and well-being.

Warmest Regards,



Nicole Ehrhart

Healthy Aging Blog

[Dementia villages: A new way to approach memory care](#)

[Aging in place with smart home technology](#)

Rachel Washburn, CHA Student Ambassador

[The rise of robotic companions to address social isolation](#)

[Overcoming ageism in healthcare](#)

Brooke Zarecki, CHA Student Ambassador

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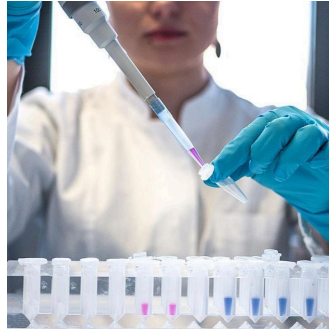
Aging News



*Aging Mastery
program strengthens
rural communities*

via *CSU Magazine*

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*Researchers develop
new method to identify
potential stroke
therapies*

via *The National
Institutes of Health*

[read more >>](#)



*Milkshake
neuroscience: how the
brain nudges us
toward fatty foods*

via *Nature*

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News from the Center

Meet the team

We've welcomed some fresh faces to the Center this semester! First is Assistant Professor Niccole Nelson, who holds a Ph.D. in research and experimental psychology from the

interdisciplinary collaborations and community outreach as a Center faculty member.

Additionally, we're pleased to introduce our new student ambassadors, Rachel Washburn and Brooke Zarecki. They will play a pivotal role in strengthening CHA's ties with the University and the wider community by supporting our on-campus partnerships and collaborating with local organizations serving older adults.

Learn more about them below!



Niccole Nelson is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at Colorado State University. A lifespan developmental psychologist by training, she aims to identify biological, psychological, and social resources that help individuals thrive through older adulthood. She is particularly interested in the ways in which modifiable, short-term experiences like stress and emotion regulation relate to longer-term, developmental trajectories of cognitive ability, psychological well-being, and physical functioning.

Interested in collaborating? Nelson is open to projects related to stress and coping, emotion regulation, and health and well-being trajectories across adulthood.



Rachel Washburn is president of the CSU Gerontology Club and serves as a student ambassador at the Center for Healthy Aging. In these roles, Washburn coordinates opportunities for students to learn more about aging and working with older adults. She also collaborates with the Fort Collins Senior Center to teach a technology class designed for older adults. Washburn is majoring in health and exercise science with a minor in gerontology. After graduating, she plans on pursuing a degree in occupational therapy.

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State University, majoring in biomedical sciences with a minor in Spanish. Her future goals are to become a physician's assistant. As a Center for Healthy Aging Student Ambassador, Zarecki works to engage students at CSU with the aging community. With an interest in healthcare, she is determined to provide resources for older adults and opportunities for her peers. She is also the vice president of the Gerontology Club, where she sets up meetings and volunteer events and identifies opportunities for intergenerational connections between older adults and the CSU community.

50 Year Club Invited Lecture





Last week, CHA Director Nicole Ehrhart gave an invited lecture at the annual 50 Year Club Luncheon, hosted by the CSU Alumni Association. The luncheon recognizes CSU alumni who have graduated 50 years ago or more as part of alumni festivities during Homecoming and Family Weekend. Ehrhart's presentation discussed what researchers are learning from canines to promote healthy aging in humans.

Genes, environment, and health: How the metal manganese causes neurological disease



On Oct. 5, the Center held the Fall 2023 installment of the Healthy Aging Speaker Series featuring [Somshuvra Mukhopadhyay](#), an associate professor of pharmacology & toxicology at the UT Austin College of Pharmacy. Mukhopadhyay's lecture focused on a heavy metal, manganese, that causes a Parkinson's-like disorder in high doses. About 35 people

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Stay tuned! A recording of the lecture will be posted on our website soon.



about us

We are a non-profit clinic offer counseling and neuropsychological assessments to community members on a sliding scale fee. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults and their loved ones through dignity and overall well-being.

**151 W Lake St, Ste 1400
8021 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, CO 80524-8021**

**PHONE: 970-491-6795
FAX: 970-797-1921**

**CAREGIVER
COUNSELING**

Individual therapy for caregivers are provided by master's level therapists at NO COST for 8 sessions. To qualify, individuals must reside in Larimer county and care for a loved one experiencing dementia or who are over the age of 60 (who is not in an assisted living facility).

**GENERAL
COUNSELING**

Individual therapy that addresses the mental health needs of older adults is provided by master's level therapists on a sliding scale fee (\$20-100). Services can be tailored for each client and may include assistance with, but not limited to, anxiety, depression, grief, and life transitions.

**NEURO-
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSESSMENTS**

Neuropsychological screeners (\$250-500) or comprehensive assessments (\$500-1000) are provided for individuals experiencing memory concerns or wanting to learn more about their cognitive health.

<https://psychology.colostate.edu/acor/>

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Center Events

Tour Tuesdays are back!



Are you interested in visiting the Center for Healthy Aging? Now's your chance – Tour Tuesdays are returning this fall! Join us in October for a look behind the scenes at the Center. Learn about CSU's aging research initiatives and explore the wide range of programs and services offered at the Center for Healthy Aging.

Admission is FREE, but don't forget to register:

[Oct. 31: 10 a.m.–11:15 a.m.](#)

Aspen Club in northern Colorado

13,700+ members strong, for residents 50+

The Center has partnered with UHealth's Aspen Club to present a series of lectures by our faculty and students during the later part of the fall semester. Find details below – registration info may vary depending on the location.

Age-related decline in bimanual dexterity: Looking beyond the role of motor functions

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Poudre Valley Hospital, Café F

Presenter: [Prakruti Patel](#)

The ability to use both hands simultaneously in skilled, bimanual tasks, such as tying shoe laces or buttoning a shirt, is crucial for independent living. Age-related decline in bimanual dexterity is well-known. Presented by Prakruti Patel, a postdoctoral researcher in CSU's Movement Neuroscience and Rehabilitation Laboratory, this talk will focus on whether decline in bimanual dexterity is related to motor functions, such as grip strength and force accuracy, and/or cognitive functions, such as attention and processing speed.

Save the date – registration will open in October!

Viral infections and Parkinson's disease: What are the risks?

Thursday, Nov. 9

11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Fort Collins Senior Center

Presenter: [Ron Tjalkens](#)

Most cases of Parkinson's disease have no known origin. However, age, genetics and environmental factors all play a role in determining whether an individual will develop this neurodegenerative disorder. Historically, pandemics such as the 1918 Spanish Flu implicate viral infections as a potential risk factor for PD. Currently circulating viruses, including COVID-19, can negatively impact the brain. This has raised many questions about the potential long-term effects of such infections. Ron Tjalkens, a professor of toxicology at CSU, will discuss how viral infections can impact brain function related to PD and will highlight why the immune system may be the balance point between protection and disease.

Register *now* by calling Fort Collins Senior Center at 970-221-6644 and refer to refer to activity #425444-01.

Sleep and circadian disruption impair cardiometabolic health

Friday, Dec. 8

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Loveland Library - Gertrude Scott room

Presenter: [Sophie Seward](#)

Sleep and circadian disruption is highly prevalent in the United States and is associated with heightened risk for Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Limited strategies or countermeasures exist to prevent the impact of sleep and

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how sleep and circadian disruption impair metabolism and whether improving timing of sleep and eating can improve health.

Save the date – registration will open in October!

Faculty News



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On Sept. 23, the Alzheimer's Association held the Walk to End Alzheimer's at Canvas Stadium. Over \$230,000 was raised by 808 participants and 145 teams. The CSU Gerontology club participated in the walk with support from members and faculty. HDFS faculty Ally Brothers and Christine Fruhauf joined the team and helped raise money toward the cause.



Do you work with undergraduate students? Please encourage students to consider declaring the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Minor (GIM). The Department of Human Development and Family Studies encourages students from ALL disciplines and majors to declare the GIM.

Questions about the minor? Contact Christine.Fruhauf@colostate.edu. Questions about HDFS 201? Contact Allyson.Brothers@colostate.edu.

Publications and Popular Press

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Marshaling Among Informal Dementia Care Partners

Ph.D. candidate Michelle Matter and Associate Professor Meara Faw published a paper in the *Western Journal of Communication* last month.

Their qualitative study focused on how informal care partners of people living with dementia foster support for themselves.



They found that care partners engage in direct strategies to marshal support, such as openly asking for help and educating others with necessary knowledge. Care partners also utilize self-support strategies by reframing their own thinking and using religion as a support source. Some care partners shared that they did not seek support, due to failed previous attempts to marshal support and uncertainty if the person they are caring for would be comfortable with outside support.



Metabolic syndrome and adiposity: Risk factors for decreased myelin in cognitively healthy adults

Aga Burzynska – an associate professor in Human Development and Family Studies and the Molecular, Cellular and Integrative Neurosciences Program, and director of the BRAiN lab – recently published an article in the journal, *Cerebral Circulation - Cognition and Behavior*. The study focused on how metabolic syndrome and adiposity (combined body mass index and waist circumference) are risk factors for cognitive dysfunction and dementia. MetS is a cluster of conditions that includes excess adiposity, hyperglycemia, dyslipidemia, and elevated blood

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The study measured myelin, a sheath that forms around nerves, in 90 cognitively and neurologically healthy adults. They found that MetS and adiposity were correlated with lower myelin. These findings call for clinical trials to establish causality between MetS, adiposity, and myelin content and to explore weight loss as a means to support the maintenance of myelin integration throughout adulthood. The study could open new avenues for prevention or treatment of cognitive decline and dementia.

GenX Mindscape podcast

Associate Professor Ally Brothers was featured on the [GenX Mindscape](#) podcast where she discussed the concept of subjective aging and its impact on midlife well-being. Tune in to learn why our perceptions of aging matter, how they shape our health outcomes, and the societal implications of fostering a positive view of aging.

Listen below:



Research Studies Currently Enrolling

Needs Volunteers!

Researchers in the Neurocognitive Measurement Lab at CSU are interested in studying cognitive engagement in healthy aging.

Who Can Participate?

Adults 18-80 years old,
fluent in English, with no
major hearing or vision
issues

What Does The Study Entail?

An online survey to determine eligibility

If qualified, an in person visit including:

- A series of cognitive tasks
- A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan

Why Should You Participate?

- Contribute to research and understanding behind how to maintain brain health in aging
- Compensation:

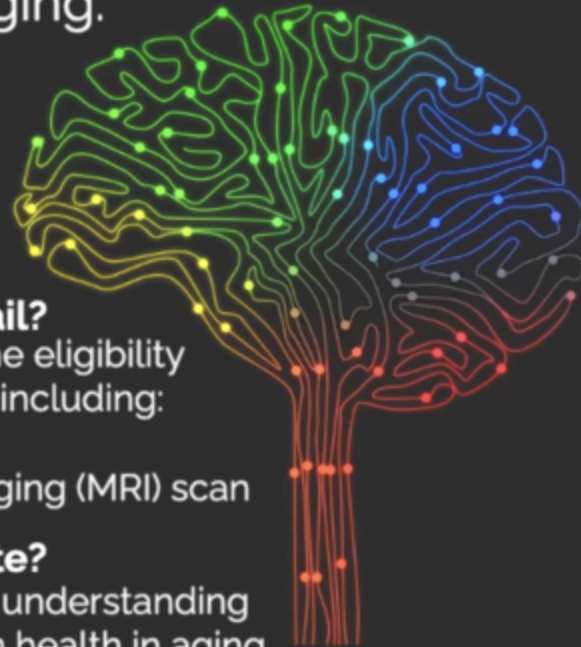
\$15 for completing an approx. 1-hour

\$25/hour for a 4-hour in-person visit (if qualified)

Contact Us!

(970) 491-6458 | nmlab@colostate.edu

Located in Fort Collins, Colorado



Colorado
State



Studies Research

Dementia Care Partners Experiences and Communication

Interested in
participating? Contact
our research team today!

Study PI: Meara Faw
Associate Professor,
Communication Studies
meara.faw@colostate.edu

Michelle Matter
michelle.matter@colostate.edu

Olivia Birg
olivia.birg@colostate.edu

What is this study about?

This study is about care partners' experiences providing care for a person with dementia.

Who can join this study?

Any person who is 18 years old or older, speaks English, and provides unpaid care for a friend or family member with dementia can participate in this study.

What will I be asked to do?

We will ask you to complete a one-time phone or video-call interview. The interview will last 30-60 minutes, and you will receive a \$15 e-gift card for your participation.



Photo by Ground Picture Shutterstock

**Help researchers by
sharing your
experiences!**

NATURE AND AGING RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

WE ARE RECRUITING INDIVIDUALS FOR A STUDY CALLED “AGING NATURALLY: UNDERSTANDING HOW SPENDING TIME IN NATURE AFFECTS OLDER ADULT’S EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND HEART-RATE VARIABILITY” AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS STUDY EXAMINES HOW SPENDING TIME IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS CAN AFFECT STRESS RESPONSES, PERFORMANCE ON COGNITIVE TASKS, AND MOOD. THE STUDY WILL OCCUR IN-PERSON ON CSU’S CAMPUS AND LAST APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS. YOU WILL BE COMPENSATED \$40 FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

YOU MUST BE EITHER BETWEEN 18-35 OR OLDER THAN 55 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY, HAVE NORMAL OR CORRECTED-TO-NORMAL VISION, BE FLUENT IN ENGLISH, AND HAVE NO HISTORY OF COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT, NEUROLOGICAL DISORDER (I.E. SEIZURE DISORDER), AND NO HISTORY OF HEART CONDITIONS OR MOTION SICKNESS.

PLEASE CONTACT MICKEY RICE (MICHAELA.RICE@COLOSTATE.EDU), OR SARA LOTEMPLIO (SARA.LOTEMPLIO@COLOSTATE.EDU) FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY.

At the BRAiN lab at CSU we carry out cutting-edge research on **healthy** brain aging supported by the National Institutes of Aging and the Alzheimer’s Association. Volunteer to help us combat dementia! If you are **male 51-55 or 71-80 years old** and willing to undergo 1-hour brain MRI, sign up by:

- Scanning the code or
- On our website: <https://col.st/nel9A>
- Call 970-631-2946
- Email: sammu@rams.colostate.edu
- We will contact you to check if you are eligible. You can earn **\$100** for completing the full study. Our studies are approved by CSU ethical committee.



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Now recruiting!
The Center has launched its
Healthy Aging Research Registry.

The registry is comprised of people who want to be contacted about studies on aging and age-related conditions. The information collected in the registry will be stored in a secure database and access to your contact information will be limited to Center for Healthy Aging leaders. CSU researchers who are performing studies that align with your interests will be given your contact information and may contact you to gauge your interest and eligibility in their study. You can then choose whether or not you would like to participate.

Interested?

Join the registry online.

Questions?

CHAResearchRegistry@colostate.edu
970-495-2528

Funding Opportunities

The Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research invites applications for the funding opportunity, "[The Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders](#)." As the demand for movement disorder specialists increases, not enough neurologists are receiving vital training in Parkinson's and related conditions. To address this need, The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF), in collaboration with longtime partner the Edmond J. Safra Foundation, launched the Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders. The program annually funds academic centers to train a new movement disorder clinician-researcher over a two-year period and is growing an international, collaborative network of next-generation leaders in Parkinson's research and care. **Application Deadline: December 7, 2023 at 3pm MST. MJFF will award eight two-year fellowships of**

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The Parkinson's Foundation and International Association of Parkinsonism and Related Disorders (IAPRD) invites applications for the funding opportunity, "[Melvin Yahr Parkinson's Disease Clinical Research Award](#)." This award is designed to foster clinical research into any aspect of Parkinson's disease conducted by young investigators who are under-represented in current research. By recognizing and honoring the exceptional contributions of young talented individuals, the award seeks to break down barriers and create a more inclusive and diverse healthcare community. It is expected that this initiative will spur innovation and promote the translation of cutting-edge scientific discoveries into efficient and practical health measures that will benefit people with Parkinson's disease. **Application deadline: January 11, 2024. Award amount: 1 year award for \$50,000 toward direct expenses over the entire project.**

Community Happenings



Faculty and Admin Pro Health Fair

Tues., Oct. 31
Lory Student Center, Ballroom D
1101 Center Ave Mall, Fort Collins,
CO, 80521
12 p.m.–4 p.m.

For CSU employees and their dependents enrolled in a CSU Anthem medical plan, receive a flu shot and blood draw to screen for health risk factors.

Aspen Club

A program of UCHHealth.

Understanding and Responding to Dementia Related Behaviors

Tues., Oct. 31
Greeley Active Adult Center
1010 6th St., Greeley, CO 80631
1 p.m.–2 p.m.

Join UCHHealth's Aspen Club to learn how to identify common behavior triggers and strategies to intervene with some of the most common behavioral challenges of Alzheimer's disease.

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