Being a patient at the UC Irvine SeniorHealth Center is a different experience. Here you are important, the doctors and staff take the time to listen and understand your concerns and feelings. They want you to clearly understand your medical issues. My mom and our family feels safe and respected when addressing medical concerns at the center with Dr. Mosqueda and her staff. Here we know Mom’s health and her wishes are the number one goal.

– Mary Maguire, daughter of a patient

UC Irvine SeniorHealth Center: Personal attention makes all the difference

Mary Maguire’s mother, Wanda Eckhardt, has been a patient of Dr. Mosqueda’s at the UC Irvine SeniorHealth Center for 12 years. “I wouldn’t take my mother anywhere else. She wouldn’t let me, for one,” she said laughing, “and two, I know she’s getting the best care in the area.” Located in Orange, California, the SeniorHealth Center (SHC) is a medical practice designed specifically to meet the special healthcare needs of older patients. Because seniors often have multiple health concerns, they frequently need coordinated care from many specialists. To make it as easy on patients as possible, the SHC team includes:

- five geriatricians
- a rheumatologist
- a physiatrist (rehabilitation physician)
- a neurologist
- a geriatric oncologist
- a physician assistant
- two geriatric pharmacists
- a social worker
- two neuropsychologists
- nurses

All staff members have special training in the care of older patients. Lab work can also be done on-site saving patients the inconvenience of going to several locations. The center offers a warm and inviting setting for older adults who want to maintain their good health, as well as for those who want to improve their health with specialized care.

“A long life is a gift not granted to everyone,” says Dr. Laura Mosqueda, UC Irvine Medical Center’s director of the Program in Geriatrics. “We want seniors to enjoy their lives to the fullest extent possible. We’re here for older adults who are in good health, as well as those who need the care of a specialist. Our vision is to provide excellent care in a loving environment. Our team does not only perform medical examinations but also focuses on mental, spiritual, functional and social well-being.”

UC Irvine Receives Grant to Improve Geriatrics Education

UC Irvine’s nationally recognized program in geriatrics has received a $2 million grant to enhance the care of older adults through a major new initiative in medical education.

As part of the four-year grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, UC Irvine will integrate geriatric principles throughout the School of Medicine’s curricula, including the medical student program and postgraduate study. Fourteen of the university’s departments have agreed to incorporate geriatrics education into their training to improve the doctor-patient relationship.

“Virtually every medical specialty treats older adults, but not every physician is equipped to meet the particular needs of those patients, many of whom may have complicated medical conditions,” said Dr. Laura Mosqueda, director of the Program in Geriatrics at UC Irvine. “Our goal is to develop the tools to help doctors meet those needs.”

Improving communication between clinicians and patients is at the heart of the effort. “Too often,” Mosqueda said, “physicians don’t know how to speak properly to patients about their conditions and prognoses. But more importantly, we don’t know how to listen properly.”

“Healthcare is not simply making a diagnosis or bringing the most current technology to bear on a medical problem,” Mosqueda said. “Doctors are obligated to communicate clearly with their patients, and we want to remedy the disconnect that often occurs, especially with seniors.”
Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

In the 10 minutes it will take you to read this newsletter, three Californians will turn 60 years old. Of course, this is assuming you’re an average reader. If you’re a really fast reader, it will be fewer. But, I think you get my point: California and our nation are experiencing a huge growth in the number of older adults.

At the UC Irvine Program in Geriatrics we are prepared for this growth and, indeed, we welcome it. Everyone on our staff provides the highest quality care and attention whether to a patient at our SeniorHealth Center, a student, or a colleague in the community. I’m proud of the people who comprise our team. You will read about awards they have received and learn more about our program, including our work to educate physicians about caring for older adults and our efforts to combat elder abuse.

Like our patients, our program is multi-faceted. We embrace the whole person and apply the latest in research, education and clinical skills to our work. I hope you will enjoy reading about our program as much as we enjoy serving older adults in Orange County and throughout the nation.

Warmly,

Laura Mosqueda, MD, FAAFP, AGSF
Director of Geriatrics
Professor of Family Medicine
Ronald W. Reagan Endowed Chair in Geriatrics

First study to examine bruising in older adults published by UC Irvine researchers

If you’ve ever found yourself wondering where you got that bruise on your hand or leg, take note. A recent study from the University of California, Irvine reveals that you’re in good company: about 75% of older adults with accidental bruises can’t remember how they got them. “Everyone knows that bruising increases as one ages due to skin breakdown, but no one had ever studied bruises in older adults,” said researcher Laura Mosqueda, MD. “We wanted to know where they occur, and how they change color. We also wanted to know what bruises caused by elder abuse looked like, but to do that, we first needed to know what non-inflicted bruises looked like.”

One big surprise from the study is that the typical color progression of a bruise that we’ve all come to accept (purple/blue, to green, to yellow) does not hold true for bruises in older adults. “A bruise in an older adult can be any color from day one,” says lead researcher Aileen Wiglesworth, PhD. “This is really important for physicians and others to know,” continues Wiglesworth, “since what they learned in medical school isn’t true for older people. Dating a bruise by its color isn’t accurate for the geriatric population.”

Other findings reveal that 90% of accidental bruises were on the extremities, and older adults who take medications that interfere with coagulation (for example, coumadin) are more likely to have multiple bruises. However, the bruises did not last any longer than the bruises of those who didn’t take the medication.

Bruises as a result of abuse

In contrast, 90% of older adults who had bruises that were inflicted by others could remember how they acquired the bruise. Inflicted bruises were also generally larger. And, while they could appear anywhere, bruises on the face, the inner surface of the arm or the back should receive special note as abused older adults had more bruises in these areas than those who had not been abused.

These groundbreaking findings were published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, Volume 57 Issue 7. For a complete copy of the article, please visit the Center of Excellence’s Web site at www.centeronelderabuse.org

“Every family has a story, only a few have a legacy.”

C. L. Huntley

Explore the many benefits of charitable giving and begin your journey of creating a lasting legacy. Contact Michael Crvarich at 949.824.6454 or legacyplan@uci.edu. Visit our Web site at www.giftlegacy.uci.edu to learn more.
What is a Geriatrician?

Geriatricians are doctors who have completed medical school, finished a residency (three years additional study) in either family medicine or internal medicine, and then completed a one or two-year fellowship in geriatric medicine. They are experts in dealing with multiple medical problems and chronic illnesses as well as psychological and cognitive issues that are common in older adults. UC Irvine geriatricians are all fellowship trained and board certified in geriatric medicine.

UC Irvine geriatricians focus on quality of life and functional ability of each patient.
Laura Mosqueda Recognized as Outstanding Mentor

Laura Mosqueda, MD, director of the Program in Geriatrics, recently received the UC Irvine Emeriti Association’s annual award for outstanding mentoring. She was recognized as a passionate educator and generous mentor to students, residents, fellows and colleagues.

UC Irvine Receives Grant continued from page 1

The lessons learned at UC Irvine will be shared in a national database to benefit physicians, hospitals and medical schools across the country.

The Donald W. Reynolds Foundation is a national philanthropic organization founded in 1954 by the late media entrepreneur for which it is named. Headquartered in Las Vegas, it is one of the largest private foundations in the United States.

Health Assessment Program for Seniors (HAPS)

For many people, the aging process is fraught with physical, mental and emotional challenges. UC Irvine Healthcare’s Health Assessment Program for Seniors (HAPS) provides a comprehensive health and psychological evaluation to help older adults (age 55 and older) improve their quality of life. The multidisciplinary assessment involves a thorough evaluation by a geriatrician, psychologist, pharmacist, nutritionist, social worker and occupational therapist. This team approach is ideal for patients who have complex medical, psychological and social challenges.

For more information, please call toll free 877.427.7824.

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