



AGEC/ GWEP Quarterly Newsletter -

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From the Director's Desk

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(DWR IOA)*

Fall greetings from the Arkansas Geriatric Education Collaborative (AGEC), the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program for Arkansas. As we enter into the final few months of 2018, we are very busy with programs. We have conducted many community programs for older adults and those that care for older adults including family caregiver workshops, Alzheimer's experience events, continuing education activities, and more.

In August, academic classes that support and focus on geriatric topics and content were started once again at UCA and ASU. We are excited about continuing our partnerships with them and training bright young people who are entering the healthcare field in the critical area of geriatrics. In October, we had our first fall webinar. Ashley Stepps, JD, Arkansas Elder Law & Special Needs Trusts Attorney from The Raymon B. Harvey Law Firm provided a 2018 Healthcare Law Update regarding: Living Wills, Advanced Care Planning, Powers of Attorney, AR Lay Caregiver Act, and More Topics. Ashley fielded many questions both live and on-line.

On December 5th, we will host our second fall Webinar that will feature...

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Flu Vaccination Toolkit Aimed at Increasing Flu Vaccination Rates in Communities

*By Heather Mercer
Executive Director, ImmunizeAR*

Last flu season was brutal. In Arkansas, 227 people died from influenza, including 171 adults who were 65 and older, and we had a record number of flu-related hospitalizations. Arkansans aren't doing a great job getting flu vaccines. According to the CDC, only 46 percent of the general population got a flu vaccine during the 2016-17 season¹. One reason for the low vaccination rate in Arkansas may be a lack of patient understanding of the efficacy of the flu vaccine. The media didn't help this last year when they wrongly reported the U.S. flu vaccine was only 10 percent effective based on Australia's flu season. Vaccinations for other diseases work so well that people may have unrealistic expectations for the flu vaccine. Some individuals choose not to get the flu shot because of the evidence that the flu vaccine isn't 100% effective in preventing the flu. However, if someone receives the flu shot and still gets the flu, the flu shot can reduce the severity of their symptoms and help them stay out of the hospital. A better understanding of this information could help increase people's willingness to accept the vaccine.

To improve the numbers of Arkansan's getting the flu vaccine...

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Opioid Abuse Among Older Adults: A Growing Concern

*By Stephanie Rose, MSW
Department of Health Sciences,
University of Central Arkansas*

With the increase among the aging Baby-Boomer population, there has been an overall increase of prescription drug use. Many older adults struggle with co-morbid diagnoses, contributing to multiple prescriptions being consumed at one time (Dowell, 2016). Older adults are also more likely to be victims of medication theft (Collins, 2018). With the rising amounts of opioid overdoses, the use of opioids for pain-management among older adults is a growing concern (Dowell, 2016). Historically, there has been more of a focus on younger adults and opioid misuse; however, the average age (50 or older) of treatment admissions for opioid abuse is rising. One in four older adults have used a prescription drug that has the potential for addiction (Carew, 2018). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that while 500,000 older adults were prescribed higher than recommended amounts of opioids, 90,000 of these individuals were identified as high risk for abuse and/or overdose (Collins, 2018).

It is projected that the amount of older adults who abuse illicit substances will double...

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Mitigating Risk of Intracranial Hemorrhage while using Blood Thinners

*By Hope Quattlebaum, PharmD
candidate and Lisa C Hutchison,
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Blood thinners, such as novel oral anticoagulant agents (NOACs), reduce the risk of developing an emboli (clot) in conditions such as atrial fibrillation (afib), deep venous thrombosis (DVT), and other cardiovascular conditions. The NOACs include apixaban (Eliquis), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), dabigatran (Pradaxa), and edoxaban (Savaysa). Using blood thinners prevent clots of all kinds, even 'good' clots. When 'good' clots are inhibited serious bleeding can occur, such as intracranial hemorrhage (ICH).

Clinicians sometimes mitigate risk by choosing to use aspirin in place of a NOAC since it is thought to have a lower risk of ICH. However, studies show that apixaban 5 mg twice daily did not increase ICH compared to aspirin therapy in afib patients⁶. Based on this, apixaban is a better choice than aspirin since it poses no additional risk and is more effective. However, it was not known if this conclusion could be applied to other disease states. A meta-analysis published in 2018 attempted to answer this question.

A meta-analysis included five...

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Seniors Bullying Seniors

*By Theresa Horton, MNsc, CNP,
GNP-BC, CADDCT, CFRDT
Director of Education, UAMS South
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Anti-Bullying Month is observed in October. Bullying is typically associated with a younger population. However, bullying among adults occurs in multiple settings and older adults are not immune from being victims. Bullying is defined as "unwanted aggressive behavior; observed or perceived power imbalance; and repetition of behaviors or high likelihood of repetition."

It is estimated that 20% of older adults experience some form of bullying. Healthcare professionals, staff and families should be aware of what bullying behavior looks like and its potential effects. It can be subtle or aggressive. Bullying can include behaviors such as teasing, insulting, gossiping, criticizing, ignoring, whispering, name calling, laughing at or taunting someone, sarcasm, rude comments, use of threats, arguing, lying about the victim, destruction of property, stealing, pushing, hitting, barring from entering or exiting a room...

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Upcoming Free Events

22 Hour CE Webinar - Nov 14-16
Community Hospice and Palliative Care Symposium. Watch live in Bentonville or livestream online. Registration REQUIRED by Monday 11/5. For more info, click [HERE](#).

2 Hour CE Webinar - December 5th
Insomnia: A Golden Opportunity to Address Psychiatric Disorders. Watch live at UAMS or livestream online. For more info, click [HERE](#).

Community Programs

At the start of our new grant year, we wanted to give a reminder of all the FREE community programs we offer statewide. Please visit our website at agec.uams.edu/communityprograms/ to check our calendar of upcoming events.

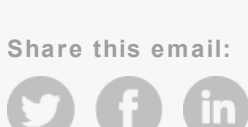
- Ageless Grace
- A Matter of Balance
- Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP)
- Tai Chi
- Alzheimer's Experience: Take a walk in their shoes

If you are interested in scheduling an Alzheimer's Experience Family Caregiver Workshop program in your community, please email Laura Spradley, Outreach Coordinator, at lspradley@uams.edu.

Geriatric Self-Study Opportunity

Are you working with older adults and want to learn more about the disease conditions and illnesses that affect this population? We have just the program for you --- **Arkansas Geriatric Mentors and Scholars Program**, also called **AR-GEMS**. AR-GEMS is a 60-hour self-study program for all health professionals across disciplines who work with older adults and want to learn more about the aging process as well as improving the delivery of care. For more information on AR-GEMS, visit us at www.agec.org/argems.

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