Request for Pilot Study Proposals by the Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center of Wake Forest University School of Medicine focused on:

Understanding and Addressing Pathways to Physical Disability in Older Persons

Letter of Intent due October 9, 2009; Final Application due November 6, 2009

The Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) of Wake Forest University School of Medicine is seeking innovative pilot study and exploratory analysis proposals to better understand determinants of physical disability in older adults. Strong priority is given to proposals that address the contributions of adipose tissue, skeletal muscle function, components of the peripheral and central nervous system, blood flow, biomarkers, and related factors to the development of disability.

These proposals may cover a broad spectrum of disciplines and involve laboratory-based, clinical-based, population-based or behavioral-based research efforts. Successful proposals should be focused on enhancing our institutional expertise in the role of the various factors that lead to the development of physical disability by either collecting pilot data or by performing analyses upon existing data sets. If successful, the work would ultimately lead to a larger, externally funded, definitive study.

Projects should address at least one of the main objectives of the current OAIC listed below, particularly with respect to their role in the development of physical disability in older persons. Integrated, multidisciplinary, and translational approaches are particularly encouraged. The OAIC can help to identify collaborators with expertise in aging and disability.

a. Assess the potential roles in the development of physical disability in older persons of:
    a. adiposity and fat distribution
    b. changes in skeletal muscle mass, composition, and function
    c. components and / or changes in properties of the peripheral and / or central nervous system
    d. arterial blood flow to skeletal muscle
    e. blood, tissue, and genetic biomarkers
b. Use a translational research approach to assess factors, including biological, genetic, co-morbid and behavioral, which contribute to age-related obesity/sarcopenia, physical function decline, or progression to disability.
c. To develop and reliably test in clinical and pre-clinical studies novel interventions which target obesity, body composition and/or muscle related factors for preventing the age-related decline in physical function and preventing or reversing the progression to disability.

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

1) Scientific merit
2) Innovation
3) Relevance to theme of understanding and preventing physical disability in older Americans
4) Potential for the data from the project to eventually result in a subsequent definitive, larger extramurally funded project
5) Junior faculty involvement

Both basic science and clinical research projects are encouraged, and may originate from investigators at either Reynolda or Bowman Gray campuses, and can include collaborations with other institutions, particularly those with OAIC's. Projects can be funded up to a maximum of $30,000 per year for up to 2 years. Leveraging funding from this award by combining with resources from other sources is encouraged but not required. A letter of intent of one page or less stating the hypothesis and a brief overview of approach is due October 9, 2009, with final applications due November 6, 2009, with notification of funding projected to be by December 14, 2009.

Inquiries are strongly encouraged so that we can can provide specific guidance in developing relevant and successful proposals. For additional information or clarification please contact Dr. Dalane Kitzman with questions at 716-3274 (dkitzman@wfubmc.edu).

Final proposals and administrative inquiries should be directed to:

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