

Editor: Henny van Dijk

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UTHRO Endowment Update

Last year, about 40 UTHRO members met at a Lunch and Learn session to hear presentations from the three finalists for our first ever seed grant award of \$2,000 from the UTHRO Endowment for Healthy Aging. The group voted to award the money to Dr. Gabriel Fries, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the UTHealth McGovern School of Medicine, to support part of his study on the effects of oxidative stress and epigenetic aging in a group of patients with bipolar disorder. After a year, Dr Fries has submitted a report on his findings that that I will attempt to summarize in lay language.

Epigenetics literally means "above" or "on top of" genetics. It refers to external modifications to DNA that turn genes "on" or "off", not changes to the DNA sequence itself but rather how cells "read" genes. Epigenetic clocks are a measure of biological age and can be used to determine or estimate the chronological age of humans. One way this can be done is by looking at the methylation of DNA. Comparing chronological aging with epigenetic aging can show whether a person is aging at a normal rate or faster or slower than normal. Science shows that aging is associated with a number of syndromes/diseases including dementias and bipolar disorder among others. Dr. Fries' study assessed oxidative stress effects on epigenetic aging in a group of individuals with bipolar disorder compared with a group of healthy individuals, on the basis that there is growing evidence that this condition is associated with signs of accelerated aging, early onset dementia and a higher incidence of age-related conditions. Contrary to his hypothesis, the results found that the oxidative markers were not significantly different between aging acceleration groups within patients and controls. As more information is known, both positive and negative, about epigenetic aging and its association with age-related diseases, strategies to prevent or retard accelerated aging can be found to aid in treatment or prevention of conditions such as dementias. Dr. Fries has presented his work and submitted it for publication, acknowledging UTHRO's contribution of support.

This year, as reported in the July issue of the Evergreen, our plans for a Lunch and Learn to select recipients of awards was postponed by the pandemic. Instead, we partnered with the Consortium on Aging to select a small project for a \$1,000 award from the Endowment, hoping that next year we can return to our original format and award significant funds to young investigators. We received six very good proposals for consideration. The Executive Committee reviewed them, and voted to award the money to Dorothy Gibson from the Harris County Public Health Healthy Aging Program.

Endowment Update... (cont.)

Her project discussed seniors facing chronic isolation due to the pandemic and the risks for a decline in cognitive function and impairment. She argues that prior to COVID-19, there were numerous activities for seniors offered at various places, not only for the activities themselves but also for the social connections they made, and also points out that many seniors do not utilize or have access to internet technology. Isolation can contribute to mental as well as physical decline. The Harris County Public Health Healthy Aging Program will provide adult coloring and activity books to the residents of senior living facilities where evidence-based programs have been conducted. The intent is to engage seniors in activities to challenge the mind and reduce cognitive decline for those who are socially isolated. In addition to the activities and coloring books, participations will also receive one-pagers on social isolation, loneliness and the potential effects on cognitive decline. Goals are to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness in seniors sheltering in place due to COVID-19 and to reduce cognitive decline in isolated seniors by providing activities that challenge the mind. The money will go toward purchasing Brain Workouts, Activity Book for Seniors (large print), Easy Mandalas: Adults Coloring Book for Beginners, Seniors and people with low vision, and Cra-Z-Art Pre-sharpened Colored Pencils, Assorted for 50 seniors.

The Executive Committee felt that this project could make an immediate impact and do the most good at this time for the money awarded. Many thanks to those who reviewed and ranked the projects.

Peggy O'Neill

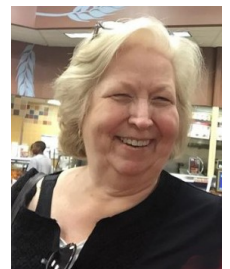
Jean Osterman Remembered...

Our longtime UTHRO member Jean Osterman unexpectedly passed away on August 3 at her home. Known for her bright smile she could light up a room by just entering.

I knew Jean way before UTHRO as the secretary of Dr Andrassy so I was thrilled to see her after retirement at many UTHRO events. However we had one more thing in common—our fervor for hockey - her team the St.Louis Blues. When my son's team the Hurricanes and the Blues got to the NHL playoffs in 2019 I was sad that the Canes lost, but thrilled that her team the Blues finally won the Stanley Cup and Jean appeared to have been ecstatic after so many years of waiting - since 1967.

Henny van Dijk

(more tributes by others in the October newsletter)



Interesting Facts about TMC

This time we feature a short little street named Frederick C. Elliott, D.D.S. Avenue. It runs east of Bertner, from Holcombe Dr. to Bates St., and dead ends at the Clark Clinic building of M.D. Anderson Hospital. It was the last street to be named in the Medical Center, opened, dedicated in 2005, and the only one to include a professional title in the name.



Frederick Chesley Elliott was born in Pittsburg, Kansas in 1893. He was a pharmacist before being influenced by a dentist friend to change professions. He received his dental degree from Kansas City Dental College, served on the faculty there, before coming to Houston in 1932 to become the third dean of the Texas Dental College, then a private proprietary school. He

inherited a school in financial trouble and set about to correct that by asking part-time faculty to forego salaries, and asking creditors to continue the "pay-as-you-can" arrangements already in place. He realized that affiliation with a university, as was the case with successful dental schools in other areas, was the logical solution to the problems. He mounted an all-out campaign for support by involving himself with many civic and health organizations in Houston. He made himself known on the state level as well. He approached Rice University as a logical partner, but they declined. The next possibility was The University of Texas. With support from the dean of the Medical Branch at Galveston who had just succeeded in affiliating the medical school with UT, Dr. Elliott initiated the campaign with the legislature to secure UT affiliation. William Bates was then Chair of the M. D. Anderson Foundation and promised that if UT agreed to the affiliation and the Texas Dental College turned over all of its assets to UT, the Foundation would give \$500,000 to the college. In 1943, the Texas Dental College became The University of Texas College of Dentistry. Dr. Elliott oversaw the design and beginnings of the construction of the new building at the medical center site during his deanship. Dr. Elliott had dreams beyond the dental school. He was an early advocate of total health care and envisioned a center where various health professions could be taught together. His work with health organizations, his lectures, and even a radio program, plus his numerous contacts led to the conception of the Texas Medical Center. In October, 1945, Dr. Elliott and eight other prominent Houston individuals signed the charter for the Medical Center, to be a non-profit corporation "exclusively for benevolent, charitable and education purposes". He served on the Board of Directors until 1952 when he stepped down as dean of the dental school to assume the role as the second Executive Director of the Texas Medical Center which he held until 1963. *Peggy O'Neill*



Dedication of Frederick C. Elliott, DDS Avenue Oct. 14, 2005: (from l to rt) Drs. Phil Pierpont, Paula O'Neill, Leslie Roeder, Catherine Flaitz, Kenneth Abramovitch, Peggy O'Neill, John Ludington, Les Fullerton.

New Accolades for...



The UT Physicians Center for Healthy Aging – Bellaire clinic has been designated as an Age-Friendly Health System. This designation is awarded through participation in the Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative, which was launched in 2017 by The John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). The overall goal of the initiative was to make at least 20% of hospitals and health systems in the United States age-friendly by 2020.

"The Institute for Healthcare Improvement has a 25 year history of innovation in high-quality health care. We are delighted to be the first in the state to earn this designation from them in recognition for our care of seniors," said Carmel Dyer, MD, professor of geriatric and palliative medicine at McGovern Medical School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). UT Physicians is the clinical practice of McGovern Medical School at UTHealth.

To receive this accolade, a organization must meet the four essential elements of care for older patients:

- **What Matters:** Know and align care with each older adult's specific health outcome goals and care preferences including, but not limited to, end-of-life care and across settings of care.
- **Medication:** If medication is necessary, use age-friendly medication that does not interfere with mobility, mentation or what matters to the older adult.
- **Mentation:** Prevent, identify, treat and manage dementia, depression, and delirium across settings of care.
- ◆ **Mobility:** Ensure older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do what matters.

"It is such an honor to have achieved the Age-Friendly Health System Commitment to Excellence," said Maureen Beck, DNP, gerontological nurse practitioner and co-medical director of UT Physicians Center for Healthy Aging. "The entire team, staff and providers, enthusiastically worked together to fully incorporate all the required elements into our geriatric primary care clinic."

A Quarantine Pass-Time



In this time of forced quarantine entertaining oneself has become a daunting task, so I decided to write about a phenomenon that is gaining much attention for several reasons—Adult Coloring Books. They are no longer just for kids. In fact, adult coloring books are all the rage right now. And while researchers and art therapists alike have touted the calming benefits for over a decade, it's childhood favorite Crayola that's gotten adult coloring books some serious grown-up attention. The famous crayon makers just launched a set of markers, colored pencils and a collection of adult coloring books, *Coloring Escapes*, last month. And though the first commercially successful adult coloring books were published in 2012 and 2013, the once-niche hobby has now grown into a full-on trend, with everyone from researchers at Johns Hopkins University to the editors of *Yoga Journal* suggesting coloring as an alternative to meditation.

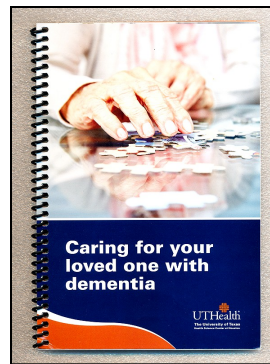
Source : CNN

Adult Coloring is nothing new for me. I have been coloring all of my life. It can be very costly, it's up to you. Actually I am a frustrated artist, I can't draw a lick but I love color and design so I color... Most of my coloring is done with pencils and pens and most of my supplies are bought online, Home Shopping Network and any crafting store. I find coloring relaxing, rewarding and very stimulating for the brain. You can do it by yourself you can move at your own pace and you don't need others approval.

Sema Spigner

Psychologists point to other important reasons to start the coloring craze. The late, great Carl Jung used it thinking it would help his patient's access their subconscious and new self-knowledge. Many psychologists today suggest this to patients as an alternative to meditation, as a means of relaxation, and as a calming tool vs. focusing on intrusive and troubling thoughts. It brings us back to happier times of childhood when we did not have as many responsibilities, and could just do something for the pure joy of it. Believe it or not, coloring has intellectual benefits as well. It utilizes areas of the brain that enhance focus and concentration. It also helps with problem solving and organizational skills. Coloring utilizes both hemispheres of the brain, thinking about balance, color choices, problem solving and fine motor skills.

A Free Handbook on Dementia



The UTHRO Endowment For Healthy Aging is pleased to present the "Caring for your loved one with dementia" handbook. This handbook was published by the UTHealth Consortium on Aging with funding support from UTHRO. It is a thoughtful and insightful guide for those dealing with the ravishes of a dementia diagnosis whether as a spouse, caregiver or patient. UTHRO's Endowment For Healthy Aging was pleased to participate in this noteworthy publication as part of our motto of "Seniors Helping Seniors".

The Consortium on Aging has provided, at no cost, 70 copies of the handbook, and I would like to offer one to you. The first 70 members who contact me at bkelly0127@gmail.com with your name and mailing address will receive a copy of the handbook in the mail. If you have questions about the handbook or about the UTHRO Endowment For Healthy Aging, please feel free to contact Peggy O'Neill (poneill@swbell.net) or me.

Barbara Kelly

UTHRO Past President

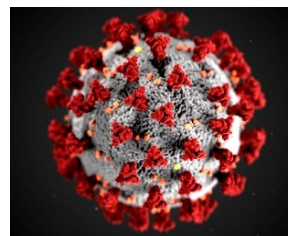
UTHRO Endowment For Healthy Aging Committee Member

UTHRO Representative on the UTHealth Consortium on Aging Executive Member

Finding An Answer...

Help researchers find a VACCINE against COVID-19

I received this email from Mary Stancel, and was sent to her by Blanche Tyson and Baylor College of Medicine
For those of you in Houston who might be interested:



Currently, we are looking for individuals 65 years or older who are in generally good/stable health and are able to come to in-clinic vaccination and follow-up visits. We intend to reach out to other age ranges with their eligibility requirement information

soon. Ideally, we want to start the study by the end of the month. We will add your contact information, and add you to our list! Thank you for letting us know of your interest, and we will keep in touch. Please extend this invitation to any of your family and friends who may want to get involved. We have attached a flyer, if you would like to send it to anyone you know. If you have any follow up questions, please let us know.

Carrie Kibler, BSN, RN

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UTHRO

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*To update your address or phone number
please contact us at 281-655-1983*

And Now For Something Completely Different...

YOU KNOW YOU ARE LIVING IN 2020 when...



You accidentally enter your PIN on the microwave.

You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.

You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.

You e-mail the person who works at the desk next to you.

Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have e-mail addresses.

You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home to help you carry in the groceries.

Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't even have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now
a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it.

You get up in the morning and go on line before getting your coffee

You start tilting your head sideways to smile. :)

You're reading this and nodding and laughing. Even worse, you know exactly to whom you are going to forward this
message.

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