



News & Notes from the National Institute of Nursing Research: January 2014

1. NINR Launches Palliative Care: Conversations Matter Campaign

[Palliative Care: Conversations Matter](#) is a new NINR campaign to raise awareness of and improve communications about pediatric palliative care. The campaign aims to increase the use of palliative care for children living with a serious illness.

Research has shown that pediatric palliative care services can reduce a child's pain, help manage other distressing symptoms and provide emotional support. Palliative care can also be an important source of support for a child's family. Yet, many health care providers hesitate to recommend palliative care for their youngest patients, and parents and caregivers are often unaware of its benefits.

"Initiating palliative care conversations is often hard for both providers and families, especially in the pediatric setting," said Dr. Patricia A. Grady, NINR director. "While it may not be an easy conversation, recommending palliative care to patients and families early can improve patient outcomes. We hope this campaign and its resources will help ensure that palliative care is considered for every child and family navigating a serious illness."

To develop the campaign, NINR brought together parents and palliative care clinicians, scientists, and professionals to give their input and expertise on what they felt was needed in the field.

The campaign offers evidence-based materials including a series of video vignettes and a customizable tear-off pad with tips for health care providers, answers to common questions about palliative care, and patient education sheets that can be tailored to individual patient needs. The materials are designed to help health care providers begin palliative care conversations with pediatric patients and their families as soon as possible following diagnosis and to continue these discussions throughout the illness to meet changing needs of patients and families.

For more information and to download materials, please visit the campaign web pages at www.ninr.nih.gov/conversationsmatter.

2. Two NINR Scientists Receive Presidential Honor

Dr. Jessica Gill, a Lasker Clinical Research Scholar and NINR intramural investigator, and Dr. Ida Spruill, an NINR-supported extramural scientist, were selected to receive the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). The PECASE is the highest honor bestowed by the United States Government on science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their independent research careers. President Obama announced the recipients in December.

Dr. Gill was recognized for an investigation of predictors of neurological deficits and PTSD onset following traumatic brain injury.

Dr. Spruill, an Assistant Professor at the Medical University of South Carolina, was honored for her work on ethno-cultural barriers to health literacy and disease management in African-Americans.

In a White House press release, President Obama said, “The impressive achievements of these early-stage scientists and engineers are promising indicators of even greater successes ahead.” The awards, established by President Clinton in 1996, are coordinated by the Office of Science and Technology Policy within the Executive Office of the President.

To view the press release, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/12/23/president-obama-honors-outstanding-early-career-scientists>.

3. NINR, NIA-Funded Study Demonstrates Cognitive Training Has Staying Power

Training to improve cognitive abilities in older people lasted—to some degree—10 years after the training program was completed, according to results of a randomized clinical trial supported by NINR and the National Institute on Aging (NIA).

The findings showed training gains for aspects of cognition involved in the ability to think and learn, but researchers said memory training did not have an effect after 10 years. The report, from the Advanced Cognitive Training for Independent and Vital Elderly (ACTIVE) study, appears in the January 2014 issue of the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

“ACTIVE is an important example of intervention research aimed at enabling older people to maintain their cognitive abilities as they age,” said NINR Director Patricia Grady, Ph.D. “The average age of the individuals who have been followed over the last 10 years is now 82. Given our nation’s aging population, this type of research is an increasingly high priority.”

To read the full press release, visit <http://www.nia.nih.gov/newsroom/2014/01/cognitive-training-shows-staying-power>.

4. Now Accepting Applications for 2014 NINR Summer Genetics Institute

The application period for the 2014 NINR Summer Genetics Institute (SGI) is now open. The 2014 SGI will be held from **June 2- 27, 2014** on the NIH Campus in Bethesda, MD.

The SGI is a tuition-free, one-month, intensive research training program that provides participants with a foundation in molecular genetics appropriate for use in research and clinical practice. The program seeks to increase the research capability among graduate students and faculty and to develop and expand clinical practice in genetics among clinicians.

Administered by the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES) as one of its Specialty Bio-Trac programs, the SGI features lectures and hands-on laboratory training. On completion of the program, participants receive eight hours of graduate-level college credit from FAES.

More than 250 SGI graduates are making a difference in communities across the country—building programs of nursing research in genetics, disseminating the results of genetics-related research in peer-reviewed scientific publications and at scientific conferences, and integrating genetics content in nursing school curricula and practice.

Graduate students, faculty, and clinicians who are citizens or permanent U.S. residents may apply. Applicants should demonstrate potential for highly productive research or a clinical career.

For more information on the SGI, please send an email to ninrsgi@mail.nih.gov or visit www.ninr.nih.gov/sgi.

5. NINR Funds Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group

Through a cooperative agreement with Duke University and the University of Colorado, NINR will continue to fund the Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group (PCRC), which focuses on building the science of end-of-life and palliative care. Through use of the existing PCRC infrastructure and resources, the funding will support high-quality, cutting edge research.

The cooperative, which now includes more than 20 member institutions across the nation, addresses national research priorities in palliative care and end of life by enhancing the quality and efficiency of research and educating clinicians and patients about best practices. This new award allows investigators from PCRC sites and others to propose studies that take advantage of the PCRC's expertise, methodological resources, patient population, and a network of multiple institutional sites.

Over the next five years, the funding award will support the PCRC as it conducts and translates research into more effective ways to relieve suffering and improve quality of life for patients who have advanced potentially life-limiting illnesses. The funding will also focus on impact of the cooperative, its value and long-term sustainability.

“Palliative care is one of the most important areas of health care impacting our nation today. High-quality, evidence-based palliative care is a critical component of maintaining quality of life at any stage of illness,” said NINR Director Dr. Patricia Grady. “The PCRC will facilitate cutting edge palliative care and end-of-life research studies that are needed to build and translate the science in this area and improve the quality of life for patients.”

For more on NINR's strategic focus on end-of-life and palliative care science, please visit www.ninr.nih.gov/PCEOLspotlight. For current funding opportunities, visit www.ninr.nih.gov/funding.

6. Deadline Extended for Funding Opportunities in Palliative Care

The deadline has been extended for an NINR funding opportunity in palliative care: [The Palliative Care Research Cooperative \(PCRC\): Enhancing Sustainability and Building the Science of Palliative Care \(R01\)](#). Letters of intent are now due **February 20, 2014** and the deadline for applications is now **March 20, 2014**.

NINR recognizes that evidence-based palliative care is a critical component of maintaining quality of life at any stage of illness, not just at the end of life. Activities in this area address issues such as: relieving symptoms and suffering; and understanding decision-making by patients, caregivers, and providers. Complete details on this funding opportunity are available at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-NR-14-003.html>.

7. Funding Opportunities: Centers of Excellence for Self-Management Research

NINR is inviting applications to establish Centers of Excellence for Self-Management Research: Building Research Teams for the Future. These funding opportunities will support sustainable research infrastructure and centralized resources for research programs in various science areas for the purpose of enhancing interdisciplinary, biobehavioral research for scientists conducting self-management research.

- The purpose of the [P20 funding opportunity](#) is to develop new and a potential sustainable interdisciplinary, biobehavioral research capacity for scientists conducting nursing research by establishing centralized research resources and a research infrastructure; build the Center's thematic science area through complementary, synergistic research activities; and begin to grow

feasibility research that will develop into new research teams of the future and independent investigator research applications.

- The purpose of the [P30 funding opportunity](#) is to enhance interdisciplinary, biobehavioral research for scientists conducting self-management research by enabling development of a sustainable research infrastructure and centralized resources in support of research programs in various science areas.

The letter of intent is due February 11, 2014. Applications are due **March 11, 2014 by 5:00 PM** local time of applicant organization. For more information, please visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-NR-14-001.html> (P20) and/or <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-NR-14-002.html> (P30).

8. Current Funding Opportunity Announcements and Notices

All current NINR Funding Opportunity Announcements, including Requests for Applications (RFAs) and Program Announcements (PAs), as well as Notices of interest from NIH, are available on the NINR website at <http://www.ninr.nih.gov/researchandfunding/dea/oep/fundingopportunities>. These items can also be found in the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html>.

To learn more about the NINR, visit www.ninr.nih.gov. For the latest news and information, you can also follow NINR on Twitter (www.Twitter.com/@NINR).