Giulio Taglialatela, PhD, Dr. Xiang Fang, Dr. Lei Lu, Dr. Anish Bhardwaj, Dr. Elena Volpi, Dr. Miguel Pappolla, Dr. Mukaila Raji have joined forces to establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Memory Disorders program at UTMB.

An estimated 5 million Americans are currently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in the U.S. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the nation. In an effort to learn more about the disease and provide patient care and social support to patients and their families, UTMB has enlisted a team of physicians and scientists with expertise in neurology, geriatric care and radiology to launch a comprehensive Alzheimer's Disease and Memory Disorders Program.

In partnership with the Sealy Center on Aging and the Mitchell Center for Neurodegenerative Disorders, the goal of the program is to provide comprehensive care to those with Alzheimer's disease and memory disorders from early diagnosis and treatment to post-clinical care. Access to innovative clinical trials is also a highlight of the program.

UTMB PHYSICIANS AND SCIENTISTS JOIN TOGETHER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

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Dr. Anish Bhardwaj, professor and chair in the Department of Neurology, spearheaded the program. “The formation of a multi-disciplinary, collaborative group is critical to improving patient care,” he says. “UTMB has a wealth of talent and resources.”

Dr. Mukaila Raji, distinguished professor and director in the Division of Geriatric Medicine, elaborates on the complex nature of caring for Alzheimer’s patients. “Many times when patients begin having memory or cognitive complaints that are suggestive of dementia, they are seen by an array of providers – some are seen by neurologists, some by geriatric physicians, and a few by psychiatrists. This is an opportunity to bring all of the players together.”

Goals of the new program are to offer patients and their families who are struggling with the disease a comprehensive, community-based approach to care that coordinates medicine, rehabilitation and care management with local resources. “We want to offer any patient with any kind of memory-related issue the opportunity to become a part of ongoing research, including clinical trials,” says Dr. Raji.

Dr. Xiang Fang, associate professor in the Department of Neurology and medical director of UTMB Health Clinics in Galveston, believes UTMB’s cutting-edge technology and diagnostic techniques, such as fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG)-positron emission tomography (PET), are an asset to the program, because they allow physicians to detect neurodegenerative disorders earlier than with clinical evaluation alone. Neuro-psychological evaluations are also conducted to comprehensively assess cognitive processes such as concentration, auditory processing and motor development.

Dr. Elena Volpi, director of the Sealy Center on Aging, recently received a grant from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to research whether health system-based or community-based care is most beneficial for patients with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. Her goal is to improve patients’ quality of life while reducing hospital and nursing home admissions.

“Dementia impacts not only the affected patients but also their loved ones, particularly the caregivers, who suffer from the psychological and physical stress of the consequences of the disease,” she explains.

Typically in the health system-based model, a patient would receive a referral from their primary care physician to a dementia care manager, as well as a nurse practitioner, who would provide ongoing clinical evaluations and a care plan. These individuals would become the point of contact for the patient and the caregiver. In a community-based setting, a social worker would serve as the contact and define the individualized care plan utilizing community-based resources.

“While both models of care can improve outcomes for patients with dementia and help their caregivers, we do not know which model is the most effective in improving the quality of life or prolonging the length of time patients can continue to live at home,” says Dr. Volpi. “This innovative clinical trial will allow us to determine which of the two models of care is superior.”

Giulio Taglialatela, PhD, director of the Mitchell Center for Neurodegenerative Disorders, specializes in the research that is currently being conducted on Alzheimer’s and dementia. He says, “Basic research on
Alzheimer's disease at UTMB has been exceptionally successful. This new program is a wonderful opportunity, and it's something unique to UTMB. We are now in a position where we can create a continuum between research and clinical practice. It will certainly be competitive in addressing the needs of the community.”

He emphasizes the importance of growing a patient database for research. “We have an interest in identifying and defining the markers of the onset and progression of Alzheimer’s disease. Our goal is to recognize and differentiate between individuals whose symptoms will progress into full Alzheimer’s or dementia and those individuals who will remain in a mild state of dementia – if we can determine these markers and recognize who is likely to progress to full Alzheimer’s or dementia, then we can start clinical interventions earlier.”

In January, UTMB was invited to become a member of the Texas Alzheimer’s Research and Care Consortium, a collaborative research effort funded by the State of Texas, as part of the Darrell K. Royal Texas Alzheimer’s Initiative. The consortium aims to provide better diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer’s and to ultimately prevent the disease.

Dr. Raji believes that established community-based programs have helped UTMB gain funding for research and support. Such programs include the following:

- **Libbie’s Place**, an adult day care program at Moody Methodist Church for those 55 and older who may be experiencing memory loss, physical impairment or social isolation and can benefit from receiving help with medications, personal care and social activities during the day while continuing to living in their own home and community. (http://libbiesplace.org/)

- **Osher Life Long Learning Institute (OLLI)**, which provides classes, seminars and field trips for those 55 and older. (https://www.utmb.edu/olli/)

- **The Sealy Center on Aging**, which focuses on improving the health and well-being of the elderly through interdisciplinary research, education and community service by integrating the resources and activities relevant to aging at UTMB. The center is also home to the the local chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association. (https://www.utmb.edu/scoa/)

- **The UTMB Health Resource Center** offers free, weekly meetings that are focused on caregiving and care giver support. See page 6 for the February schedule of classes. (https://www.utmb.edu/health-resource-center)

“A big part of getting support for our centers from places like the National Institute of Health is that we already have an established community-based caregiver program. Very few cities of our size have the resources we do,” say Dr. Raji.

As UTMB’s Alzheimer’s Disease and Memory Disorders Program ramps up, the team is working on a vision for the future that includes the phased opening of memory disorders clinics in Galveston, Alvin, Angleton and League City. Future plans also include post-clinic care, in-home education for patients and caregivers, and new clinical research projects.
Employee Access 2-Care Program offered as a benefit to UTMB employees

Feeling under the weather? UTMB proudly offers Access 2-Care appointments as a benefit to all active employees and their dependents for immediate care needs.

By dialing (409) 772-2273, you can schedule an appointment with a primary care provider within 24 hours* or a specialist within seven days.

Access 2-Care appointments do not apply to routine care appointments, annual well checks, prescription refill appointments or any condition that does not require immediate attention. If you are seriously ill or injured, please go directly to your nearest emergency room.

For more information, visit intranet.utmb.edu/2-care. To schedule an appointment, call 409-772-CARE (2273).

*Your wait may be longer than seven days to see a specialist. Your wait may be longer than 24 hours if you want to see your preferred PCP if the 7-day/24-hour timeframe falls on a Sunday.

The Joint Commission is coming!

UTMB’s full Joint Commission Accreditation survey is coming, and the surveyors could arrive any day from now through November 2018. Continual readiness is key, and there are some easy actions we can take to ensure patient and employee safety:

- Ensure “clean” storage areas are clean.
- Consistently and properly clean equipment and ensure proper storage of clean equipment.
- Ensure surfaces are clean, such as procedure carts, crash carts and supply bins.
- Do not store drinks in containers that are not approved or outside of a hydration stations.
- Avoid storing employee food in patient care areas.
- Properly discard expired items (e.g., supplies, medications, nourishment).
- Properly store linens.
- Ensure food is labeled according to policy.
- No cardboard boxes (unless approved by Healthcare Epidemiology).
- ALWAYS perform proper hand hygiene.
- Ensure safe, compliant storage of oxygen tanks.
- Do not reuse oxygen connectors.
- Protect patient privacy (e.g., do not leave computer screens open that display patient health information).
- Do not block fire extinguishers with equipment.
- Properly store linens.
- Ensure crash cart logs are up-to-date and complete.

UTMB’s Department of Quality, Safety & Performance Improvement website provides readiness checklists and other helpful resources to ensure all departments are prepared for the surveyors’ arrival. For more information, please visit http://intranet.utmb.edu/qhs/TheJointCommission/default.asp.

New patient experience and event reporting system coming this spring

This spring, UTMB’s Department of Quality, Safety & Performance Improvement will replace the current Patient Safety Net (PSN) System with a reporting tool called the Midas+ Juvo Patient Experience and Reporting System.

In addition to capturing information on near misses and adverse events, the new system will allow users to report positive patient experiences. It will also provide real-time data and scorecards.

Implementation of the new system comes in response to physician, resident and staff concerns that the current system is very cumbersome to use.

Stay tuned in the upcoming months for more information on the new system!
The Great Catch Award recognizes individuals and teams who catch potential patient safety errors and adverse events before they reach the patient. These “great catches” are recorded in data management systems like the current Patient Safety Net system (which will be replaced with a sleeker and more efficient tool this spring, Midas+ Juvo).

The goal of patient safety reporting is to reduce the risk of system and process failures, thereby reducing harm to our patients, visitors and staff.

This month’s Great Catch Award was presented to Maryam Noor (supervisor, Lab Services; Tissue Antigen Laboratory), Daniel Madrigal (medical lab scientist; Blood Bank Transfusion Operations), Velvet Maragh (medical lab scientist; Blood Bank Transfusion Operations), Jeanene Trochesset (transplant coordinator; Kidney Acquisition) and Mirna Gloria (imaging library representative).

The inpatient Always Award was presented to Jennie Sealy Hospital Surgery Unit 9C. This quarter, the unit was rated highly by patients for overall experience, communication with nurses, and communication with doctors. This is the fifth time Jennie Sealy 9C has received an Always Award! Nurse Manager Shelito “Lee” Alviza accepted the award on behalf of the unit.
HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER "TIME OUT" SESSIONS FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

Every Wednesday at 2 p.m. in Jennie Sealy Conference Room 2.506A, UTMB’s Health Resource Center offers 30-minute “Time Out” sessions focused on caregiving, caregiver support, self-care and other health related topics. Below are schedule and topics for the month of February. Sessions are open to all. For more information, contact Patient Resource Specialist Savannah Parks (sjparks@utmb.edu) or visit utmb.edu/health-resource-center.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Caregiver Zen Hour</td>
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<td>Caregivers take on many responsibilities and stress. Often their emotional self-care needs go unmet. Caregivers, family members and patients are invited to participate in the “Caregiver Zen Hour” which offers relaxing and comforting activities (pet therapy, aromatherapy, massage chairs, adult coloring books and pastoral care) to decrease stress and allow time for themselves.</td>
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| Feb. 14| Mobilize Your Loved Ones           | Cathy Elton, PT, MPT, & Tyler Morrison BS, CSCS, CEAS                     | Cathy and Tyler will present information on good body mechanics for assisting loved ones who have impaired mobility, to include  
  • Transfers (e.g. sitting to standing, sitting to laying down  
  • Assistive devices and how to adjust them  
  • Proper body mechanics for lifting |
| Feb. 21| Finding Your Rejuvenating Activity | Ashley Fox & Sydney Britton, School of Health Professions OT Student Group | Join us to discuss the importance of self-care and how participating in enjoyable/relaxing activities regularly can add to your quality of life. The presenters will share resources and techniques for participating in meaningful activities. |
| Feb. 28| Supporting a Loved One with Diabetes| Kelly Wyntjes Ferguson, RN BSN CEN                                         | Join us as our Diabetes Educator, Kelly Wyntjes Ferguson, provides tips and tools that caregivers can implement to support someone with diabetes and promote their best possible health. |

SHOUT OUTS!

**Dr. Mohamad Chaaban** and his team were just great. I trust them to take care of me. (Ear, Nose & Throat)

**Dr. Brian Wong** has been my ophthalmologist for more than a decade. He’s courteous, pleasant and professional at all times. Excellent doctor! (Ophthalmology)

**Dr. Shawn Nishi** took time to explain procedures so that we could understand and everyone was so pleasant and smiling. **Gisele Lombard** (nursing program coordinator) was so good. She explained and followed up. The people were cheerful and the space was clean. (Internal Medicine, Pulmonary)

**Dr. Vicente Resto** explained everything well. He is an excellent doctor; he’s the great combination of professional yet compassionate. (Ear, Nose & Throat)

I had a good experience. Care Manager **Lynne Howsley** and Social Worker **Tabatha Simpson** gave me literature on housing and we discussed home care. The dietician gave me literature. The nurses were excellent. I was given everything that I needed. (Cardiology/Coronary)

There are several people that made my experience top notch while I stayed at the League City Hospital: **Annette Smith** (anesthesia technician II), **Paige Reyer** (ER technician II), **Sinju Aliyas** (nurse clinician IV), **Damonique Brandon** (patient care technician I), **Aretha Washington** (patient care technician I), **Jasmine Sabbahi-Jones** (physical therapist) and **Heather Gardner** (nurse clinician III). Thank you for your care! (UTMB League City Campus)

**Dr. Matthew Crookston** has a very pleasant bedside manner and seems sincerely concerned about my well-being. He was very also helpful in helping my daughter complete FMLA for her employer. (Texas City Eye Clinic)

I’ve always had a good experience with my doctors who took me through the breast center experience. **Drs. Celia Chao, Natasha Hirani and Sunny Hatch** were all great. I’ve been breast cancer free for one year. (UHC Oncology)

**Tommy Fields** (customer service representative) always greets us with a smile and conversation He is very professional, polite and helpful! (Radiology)