History and Mission of the NIA

The National Institute on Aging (NIA), one of the 25 institutes and centers of the National Institutes of Health, leads a broad scientific effort to understand the nature of aging and to extend the healthy, active years of life. Formed in 1974 by Congressional mandate, the National Institute on Aging provides leadership in aging research, training, health information dissemination, and other programs relevant to aging and older people.

The NIA’s mission is to improve the health and well-being of older Americans through research, and specifically to:

- Support and conduct high quality research on, aging processes, age related diseases, and the special problems and needs of the aged
- Train and develop highly skilled research scientists form all population groups
- Develop and maintain state-of-the-art resources to accelerate research progress
- Disseminate information and communication with the public and interested groups on health and research advances and on new directions for research

The NIA sponsors research on aging through extramural and intramural programs. The extramural program funds research and training at universities, hospitals, medical centers, and other public and private organizations nationwide. The intramural program conducts basic and clinical research in Baltimore, MD, and on the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD.
The Geriatrics Branch
Chief: Basil Eldadah, M.D., Ph.D
Extramural Scientist Administrators:
Lyndon Joseph, Ph.D
Marcel Salive, M.D., MPH
Susan Zieman, M.D., Ph.D

The Geriatrics Branch focuses on health issues regarding the aged. Research emphases include:

- Multifactorial geriatric syndromes, such as falls, frailty, and various types of disability
- Effects of comorbidity and polypharmacy
- Effects of age-related changes on clinical or functional disease outcomes or treatment responses
- Effects of physical activity on disease and disability in older persons
- Elucidation, diagnosis, and treatment of previously unappreciated pathologic changes in old age (e.g., sarcopenia, vascular stiffening, diastolic dysfunction)
- Exercise Physiology and metabolism, exercise effects/interventions in disability and disease, disability trajectory and prevention, physical therapy and rehabilitation, falls and fall prevention

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The Clinical Gerontology Branch
Chief: Chhanda Dutta, Ph.D
Extramural Scientist Administrators:
Nalini Raghavachari, Ph.D
Giovanna Zappala, Ph.D; M.P.H

The Clinical Gerontology Branch focuses on clinically-related research on aging changes over the life span. Research emphases include:

- Healthy aging across the life span, including exceptional longevity
- Protective factors against multiple age-related conditions
- Determinants of rates of progression of age-related changes that affect disease risk, particularly those for multiple age-related conditions
- Menopause and mid-life aging changes
- Translational human research to follow up findings from basic research on aging
- Long-term effects of current or new interventions that may be administered over a large part of the life span
- Long-term effects of physical activity throughout the life span

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The Clinical Trials Branch
Chief: Sergei Romashkan, M.D., Ph.D
Extramural Scientist Administrators:
Barbara Radziszewska, Ph.D

The Clinical Trials Branch plans and administers clinical trials on age-related issues. Research emphases include:

- Interventions to prevent or treat “geriatric syndromes”, disability, and complications of comorbidity or polypharmacy
- Trials to detect age- or comorbidity-related differences in responses to interventions against conditions found in middle age and old age
- Interventions for problems associated with menopause and other mid- and late-life changes
- Interventions that may affect rates of progression of age-related declines in function in early and mid-life
- Interventions with protective effects against multiple age-related conditions

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