This electronic *Newsflash* is intended to keep you informed about our work and to invite you to participate in our various research, education and outreach activities. The *Newsflash* began as a communication tool for our Community Committee, but readership continues to expand to include colleagues in academia, clinical settings and social service agencies around the state. If you see ways that we can work together on shared projects, please let us know.

In this *Newsflash* you will find the following information:
- **PRC News, Activity, and Research Findings**
- **Grant Submissions and Awards**
- **Presentations and Manuscript Publications**
- **In-Service Training Opportunities**

*For a complete list of our projects, please visit our website at* [www.yalegriffinprc.org](http://www.yalegriffinprc.org).

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**PRC News**

*Our next Community Committee meeting* will be postponed until the next quarter, due to our plans to offer an Evaluation Workshop in May (*see below for details*). We’ll keep you posted on the date and time.

**PRC to offer Fundamentals of Evaluation, a free workshop series, on May 16th and 23rd** - The PRC is offering this 2-session workshop to our community partners. Our intended audience includes organizations and agencies that provide programs or services, but have limited knowledge or resources to measure their effectiveness or impact. Session 1 (May 16th) will focus on the fundamentals of evaluation and will examine some “real world” evaluation approaches. Session 2 (May 23rd) will address constraints and weaknesses in evaluation design. Each session is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to noon (registration starts at 8:00 a.m.) at the Hewitt Pavilion Center for Cancer Care at Griffin Hospital, located at 350 Seymour Avenue in Derby. Presenters include PRC Director Dr. David Katz, along with Dr. Valentine Njike, PRC Assistant Director of Research and Evaluation, and Jesse Reynolds, PRC Data Analyst. Seating is limited to 25 participants. **Please RSVP by Friday, May 4th** to Michelle Pinto-Evans, phone 203-732-1265 Ext. 218, email michelle.evans@yalegriffinprc.org, or contact her if you have any questions.

**PRC Staff Updates**

**Congratulations to Dr. Ather Ali, ND, MPH** who has received a 5-year Career Development Award from the National Institutes of Health/National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine to study the effects of mindfulness meditation in people with fibromyalgia, a chronic pain syndrome. This fellowship means that his work will be based at Yale University, where he is an Associate Research Scientist in the Department of Pediatrics. We wish him well with this new phase of his career.

**Lisa Rosenberger, ND, MS, LAc**, a licensed Naturopathic Physician and Acupuncturist, has worked at the Integrative Medicine Center (IMC) at Griffin Hospital since 2009, and has been working on our studies focusing on massage therapy for osteoarthritis of the knee. With Dr. Ali’s departure, Dr. Rosenberger will serve as Project Coordinator for our recently funded massage study. She has a Doctorate of Naturopathic Medicine and a Master’s of Science in Oriental Medicine, and is interested in understanding and treating chronic disease from both a Naturopathic and a Chinese medicine perspective.
Welcome to Rocky Ayettey, MS, who has spent several months volunteering her time on our research projects, and is now joining our staff as a part-time Research Associate. She recently received a Master’s Degree in Human Nutrition from the University of Bridgeport, and will be playing various roles on our clinical and community-based research projects.

### Current Activity and Research Findings

**UPCOMING STUDIES**

**Dose and Response to Chocolate (DARC)** – The PRC and Boston Medical Center have received approximately $787,000 in funding from the Hershey Company for an 18-month study to compare the effects of 2 doses of cocoa consumption (5 vs. 10 grams of cocoa powder) per day over an 8-week period on risk factors for cardiovascular disease in 120 adults with stage 1 hypertension. Specifically, we will look for any changes in their blood pressure, blood vessel function (stiffness of the artery walls and their ability to constrict and dilate as the heart pumps blood through them), serum lipids, glucose, insulin, body weight, and waist circumference as a result of consuming cocoa. Cocoa-containing products have already been shown to have cardio-protective effects, perhaps due to their flavonoid content. Our own studies have shown that a dose of 10 grams of cocoa powder can lead to improved blood vessel function in overweight adults. We now want to learn whether the cardiovascular benefits of cocoa-containing products vary when compared to a smaller dose, and whether there is a direct impact on blood pressure. Because chocolate is a popular dietary source of cocoa but is high in calories and fat and often high in added sugar, it’s important to determine the minimum dose of cocoa that can provide “heart-healthy” benefits without affecting weight and blood sugar, if used in chocolate products. Results of this study will help guide recommendations for consumers’ daily lives. For more information, please contact Dr. Valentine Njike by email at [valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org), or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 304.

**Exploring Massage Benefits for Arthritis of the Knee (EMBARK)** – The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded a $2.75 million shared grant to Duke Integrative Medicine and its key research partners at the Yale-Griffin PRC and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) to investigate the impact of massage therapy on people with osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee. The combined research team will conduct a randomized controlled trial to definitively evaluate the impact of an 8-week course of Swedish massage on pain, stiffness, and physical function in people with OA of the knee, how long the effects last over a one-year period, and the cost-effectiveness of this treatment. OA can lead to chronic pain and disability, and conventional treatments are often associated with incomplete pain relief and/or side effects of pharmacological treatments. Our initial pilot study showed massage to be feasible and effective in treating OA of the knee, leading to improved flexibility, less pain, and improved range of motion lasting for several weeks after the treatment ended. A follow-up study to determine optimal “dose” found that a 60-minute massage offered once a week over an 8-week period was most effective and practical, compared to 60 minutes twice a week, or 30 minutes once or twice a week. This new study will recruit more than 200 participants with OA of the knee and will follow them for a year. For those who qualify, treatments will be available at the Integrative Medicine Center at Griffin Hospital in Derby, CT, St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston, CT, and Duke University in Durham, NC. For more information, please contact the EMBARK study coordinator Dr. Lisa Rosenberger by email at [lisa.rosenberger@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:lisa.rosenberger@yalegriffinprc.org) or by phone at 203-732-1265, ext. 305.

### In the Works

**Recent /Upcoming Grant Submissions**

**UPCOMING SUBMISSIONS**

**CDC Special Interest Project (SIP) Proposals** - The PRC is partnering with members of the Griffin Hospital medical staff to submit 3 proposals in May to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for Special Interest Project (SIP) funding. Each year, the CDC provides a certain amount of SIP
funding for research on specific topics, and PRCs across the country are eligible to apply. The proposals that we are submitting this year are described below.

- **Translation of the FICSIT study to prevent falls among vulnerable seniors in the Lower Naugatuck Valley region of Connecticut.** Principal Investigator: Lionel Lim, MD, MPH, Griffin Faculty Practice (Internal Medicine and Preventive Medicine) - Falls are a significant problem among the older population, resulting in serious injury, visits to the emergency department, and hospitalizations. There are many effective fall prevention interventions, but few have been successfully translated into routine community practice, particularly in medically underserved communities with frail older adults who are at high risk of falls and fall-related injuries. The goal of this trial is to develop and feasibility-test an innovative multi-component approach to prevent falls in a population of home-dwelling seniors living in an underserved town serviced by a community hospital. The specific aim is to compare the effectiveness of usual health care plus nurse educational visits with usual care plus a targeted risk factor abatement intervention in reducing fall rate and improving mobility and confidence among vulnerable community-dwelling older adults.

- **Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening among Muslim Women in the U.S.** Principal Investigator: Haq Nawaz, MD, MPH, Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine. Muslim women in the U.S. have unique cultural, religious, and language needs which often hamper their utilization of health care and preventive services. Islamic values may result in lower rates of cervical and breast cancer screening as a result of teachings which promote modesty and sanctity of the female body and forbid its exposure. The goal of this project will be to understand the barriers, facilitators, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions among Muslim women concerning cancer screening, particularly for breast and cervical cancer, by administering a culturally sensitive survey to a representative sample of Muslim women. The development of the survey will be guided by results of focus groups with Muslim women and with health care providers who routinely provide care to Muslim women. Survey findings will help health care providers and policy makers devise culturally sensitive screening programs which are suitable for Muslim women.

- **Lifestyle Medicine Competency Assessment Among Senior Primary Care Residents.** Principal Investigator: David L. Katz, MD, MPH, and Haq Nawaz, MD, MPH, Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine. Lifestyle medicine is the evidence-based practice of helping patients adopt and sustain behaviors that affect their health and quality of life. Patients view physicians as their most reliable source of health information, and when counseled, are more likely to report making healthy changes in diet and increasing physical activity. However, few physicians routinely counsel their patients to adopt healthy lifestyles, often due to inadequate training to play this role during their residency programs. The proposed study will determine the level of competency for lifestyle counseling among primary care residents by: designing and administering a survey to a sample of senior residents and faculty in primary care residency programs and a structured clinical exam to a sample of primary care residents; and surveying residency program directors to assess the status of lifestyle medicine training in their programs. The study will be conducted in partnership with all 25 primary care residency programs (internal medicine, family medicine, preventive medicine, and Ob-Gyn) in CT, and will also include a nationwide survey of senior primary care residents in 40 residency programs. Findings will help medical educators, hospital administrators, and policy makers devise future residency programs that place greater emphasis on training to promote healthy lifestyles.

### Presentations and Publications

**PRESENTATIONS**

David Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP, PRC Director, delivered the following presentations:

- **The Road Not Taken**, keynote presentation on March 2nd at the Carolinas Education Institute Obesity Conference 2012 in Charlotte, NC.

- **Feet, Forks, and the Fate of the Nation: Turning the Tide on Obesity**, keynote session on March 10th at the American Medical Student Association Convention in Houston, TX.
• **Defining the Scope of the Problem** on March 20th at the Marketing Disease Prevention and Awareness (MDPA) Conference in Silver Spring, MD.

• **Feet, Forks, and the Fate of Our Families**, keynote presentation for the Highland Foundation on March 22nd in Pittsburgh, PA and on March 23rd in Harrisburg, PA.

• **Food as Medicine: The Case for a Figurative Spoon Full of Sugar**, 15th annual Stanley P. Mayers Endowed Lecture on April 3rd at the Pennsylvania State University in State College, PA.

• Keynote presentation on March 31st at the My City Kitchen First Culinary Extravaganza Fundraiser Event to benefit children’s health and wellness, held at the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, CT.

• Press conference on April 16th to introduce the NuVal® Nutritional Scoring System at Lowes Foods, Inc. in Charlotte, NC.

• **Feet, Forks, and Fate: Harnessing the Power of Lifestyle over Medical Destiny** on April 24th at the Port Washington Public Library in Port Washington, NY, sponsored by the Health Advisory Council.

**Jesse Reynolds, MS**, PRC Data Analyst, delivered the following presentations:

• **Results of the 2011 Milford Public School Survey and the 2011 Ninth Grade Underage Drinking Forum Parent & Student Survey** on March 12th at the Milford Prevention Council Monthly Meeting in Milford, CT.

• **Hospital Community Needs Assessment: Valley CARES and the Community Health Profile** on March 12th at the CT Hospital Association and the CT Association of Directors of Health Collaboration Meeting in Wallingford, CT.

**PUBLICATIONS**


**In-Service/Training Opportunities**

You are invited to join us at our Journal Club meetings usually held every other month. We review and critique publications on topics such as community-based research, clinical research, and public health. This helps us stay up-to-date on research findings. It also allows us to examine publications (for the research questions, study design, results and conclusions) so we can apply the knowledge gained and lessons learned to the design of our own projects.

The next Journal Club meeting will be held at the PRC on the second floor of Griffin Hospital.

• **Tuesday, May 8th from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.**


If you have questions or want to receive a PDF version of the article by email, contact Dr. Valentine Njike by email at valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org, or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 304.

**Let’s Stay in Touch**

We want to hear from you – let us know what you are doing and how our research might assist you in your work. Please contact Beth Comerford, MS, Deputy Director (beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org) or any of the staff listed in this Newsflash.
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