



HARVARD T.H. CHAN
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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Healthy Aging Symposium - *From Cells to Society: The Science of Extending Healthspan*

October 9, 2026

Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School, Rotunda Room

Supported by Danone Institute North America

9:00-9:30am: Coffee and Pastries available

9:30-10:00am: Opening Remarks

- **Andrea Baccarelli**, Dean of the Faculty, Harvard Chan School
- **Leslie Lytle**, Professor of Nutrition, UNC Chapel Hill | President, DINA
- **William Mair**, Professor of Molecular Metabolism, Harvard Chan School

10:00-11:00am: Keynote Speaker

- **Daniel Promislow**, Senior Scientist and Scientific Advisor, Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, Tufts University [What If We Succeed? From Flies and Dogs to a Long-Lived Society]

11:00-11:15am: BREAK

11:15am-12:05pm: Nutrition, *Session Chair: William Mair*

- 11:15-11:40am: **Frank Hu**, Fredrick J. Stare Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School [Diet Strategies for Promoting Healthy Aging and Longevity: Insights from Large Cohorts]
- 11:40am-12:05pm: **Courtney Peterson**, Associate Professor of Nutrition, Harvard Chan School [Could Intermittent Fasting Extend Healthspan and Lifespan in Humans?]

12:05-12:55pm: Aging Biomarkers: Microbiome + Multi-omics: Diet ↔ Microbiome ↔ Host Aging Biology, *Session Chair: Courtney Peterson*

- 12:05-12:30pm: **Vadim Gladyshev**, Professor of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School [Measuring and Targeting Aging]
- 12:30-12:55pm: **William Mair**, Professor of Molecular Metabolism, Harvard Chan School [Metabolic Flexibility and Healthy Aging]

12:55-1:30pm: Panel Discussion with Morning Speakers, *Moderator: Laura Kubzansky*

1:30-2:30pm: LUNCH

2:30-3:20pm: Environment, Immunity & Infectious Challenge: Exposures and Immune Resilience Across the Lifespan, *Session Chair: Laura Kubzansky*

- 2:30-2:55pm: **Marc Weisskopf**, Cecil K. and Philip Drinker Professor of Environmental Epidemiology and Physiology, Harvard Chan School [Brain Aging and Environmental Exposure]
- 2:55-3:20pm: **Wendy Garrett**, Irene Heinz Given Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases, Harvard Chan School [Microbiome & Chronic Disease]

3:20-4:10pm: Cohorts: Epidemiology from Nutrition to Behavioral Sciences: “Proof in People” and Lifecourse Trajectories, *Session Chair: Marc Weisskopf*

- 3:20-3:45pm: **Laura Kubzansky**, Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard Chan School [The Role of Social and Behavioral Factors in Biological Aging]
- 3:45-4:10pm: **Jukka-Pekka “JP” Onnela**, Professor of Biostatistics, Harvard Chan School [Digital Phenotyping and Healthy Aging]

4:10-4:30pm: BREAK

4:30-5:00pm: Panel Discussion with Afternoon Speakers, *Moderator: Daniel Promislow*

5:00-5:30pm: Short Talks with Rising Stars in Healthy Aging, *Session Chair: Laura Kubzansky*

- 5:00-5:15pm: **Peng Gao**, Assistant Professor of Environmental Health and Exposomics, Harvard Chan School [Exposomics and Healthy Aging: From Population Patterns to Molecular Mechanisms]
- 5:15-5:30pm: **Yuan Ma**, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School [Nature vs. Nurture in Extreme Longevity]

5:30-6:00pm: Closing Remarks; Announcement of DINA Pilot Awards for Healthy Aging

6:00-7:00pm: Trainee Poster Session & Wine and Cheese Reception; Elements Café

Symposium Speakers



Peng Gao

Peng Gao is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Health and Exposomics at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. His lab studies the human exposome, the totality of environmental exposures and the biological responses they trigger, and how it shapes aging and chronic disease. The lab combines high-resolution mass spectrometry with multi-omics integration across population cohorts and experimental models. He was previously an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh and a postdoctoral scholar at Stanford University.



Wendy Garrett

Wendy S. Garrett is the Irene Heinz Given Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Harvard Chan Microbiome in Public Health Center. She serves as a physician in Medical Oncology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's GI Malignancies Center and a Physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Her laboratory investigates how the gut microbiota governs host immunity, epithelial biology, and human disease through microbial products, proteins, and metabolites. Her research has established that microbial protein and metabolite activity states, shaped by diet, genetics, and community composition, causally regulate host immune and epigenomic responses, with significant consequences for colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel diseases, and chronic kidney disease. She is a Fellow of the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Association of American Physicians, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and the American Academy of Microbiology.



Vadim Gladyshev

Vadim Gladyshev is Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Director of the Center for Redox Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and a faculty member of the Broad Institute. He earned his degrees at Moscow State University and trained at the National Institutes of Health. His laboratory studies aging, rejuvenation, and lifespan control using integrated experimental and computational approaches. He has authored more than 500 publications, is a recipient of the NIH Pioneer, Transformative, and Eureka Awards, and is an elected member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.



Frank Hu

Frank Hu is an internationally recognized leader in nutrition, epidemiology, and the prevention of cardiometabolic diseases. He serves as Chair of the Department of Nutrition and Fredrick J. Stare Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and as Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital. His research has identified key dietary and lifestyle determinants of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease; advanced the fields of nutritional metabolomics and precision nutrition; and fostered long-standing international collaborations, including the PREDIMED intervention trials. He also directs the Dietary Biomarker Development Center at Harvard. Dr. Hu is among the most highly cited researchers in medicine and public health worldwide, with more than 1,000 scientific publications (H-index 339). He has played a prominent role in national and international guideline development, including service on the 2015 U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. His contributions have been recognized with numerous honors, including the American Diabetes Association's Kelly West Award for Outstanding Achievement in Diabetes Epidemiology, the American Heart Association's Ancel Keys Memorial Lectureship, and election to the National Academy of Medicine in 2015.



Laura Kubzansky

Laura Kubzansky is Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Co-Director of the Healthy Aging Initiative, founding director of both the JPB Environmental Health Fellowship Program and the Lee Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and a faculty affiliate of the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. With over 400 publications, Dr. Kubzansky has published extensively on the role of psychological and social factors in health, with a focus on stress and positive psychological assets in relation to cardiovascular disease and healthy aging. She also conducts research on whether stress, emotion, and other psychological factors are pathways underlying social disparities in health. She has served as Principal or Co-investigator on grants funded by the National Institutes of Health, Veterans Administration, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Environmental Protection Agency, and other distinguished organizations. Dr. Kubzansky also has a strong history of mentoring, having worked closely with over 150 graduate students and postdoctoral research fellows. She is an elected fellow in the American Psychological Association, the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research, and the Society for Biopsychosocial Science and Medicine and has served as an expert advisor to numerous foundations, health agencies, and the government.



Leslie Lytle

Leslie Lytle is a Professor at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with appointments in both the Departments of Nutrition and Health Behavior. She has served as President of the Danone Institute for North America since 2018 and has been a board member since 2006. She earned her undergraduate degree in Medical Dietetics from Penn State University, a master's degree in Medical Sociology and Education from Purdue University, and a doctorate in Health Behavior from the University of Michigan. Following postdoctoral training in epidemiology at the University of Minnesota, she spent more than 20 years on Minnesota's Epidemiology faculty before joining UNC to chair the Department of Health Behavior in its School of Public Health. Dr. Lytle's research has focused on the design and evaluation of multilevel, community-based interventions to reduce obesity risk, improve dietary behaviors, and increase physical activity. She has served as principal investigator on several of the largest NIH-

funded school-based intervention trials, including CATCH and the Trial of Activity in Adolescent Girls. She also collaborated with Dan Buettner to pilot the first community-level Blue Zones Longevity Project in Albert Lea, Minnesota, exploring how structural changes within a community can promote healthier lifestyles, enhance well-being, and improve population longevity.



Yuan Ma

Yuan Ma is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Faculty Director of the Epidemiology of Aging Program at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She also holds a secondary faculty appointment at the Marcus Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife. Dr. Ma studies aging through population-based research, with a focus on the heart-brain axis, brain aging, and dementia prevention. Her research is supported by multiple NIH awards, and a primary focus is identifying and targeting abnormal blood pressure dynamics and hemodynamic risk for dementia prevention. She also investigates the shared causes of multiple age-related conditions and functional decline in the oldest-old population by integrating epidemiologic and geroscience approaches.



William Mair

William Mair is a Professor of Molecular Metabolism at Harvard, and Co-Director of the Harvard T.H. Chan Healthy Aging Initiative. He received his BSc in Genetics and PhD in Biology from University College London, and completed his postdoctoral training at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, CA. The Mair lab studies mechanisms that mitigate the risks of aging, with a focus on metabolism and how changes to food intake can impact the aging process. They are defining how nutrient and energy sensors in cells become dysfunctional with age, leading to metabolic inflexibility and accelerated aging. Dr. Mair's work aims to develop therapeutics that maintain healthy metabolic function, thereby enabling our bodies to process the food we eat effectively as we age to prolong healthy aging. Dr Mair has won numerous awards for his work on aging and geroscience, including the American Federation Breakthrough in Gerontology Award, the Glenn Medical Foundation for Medical Research Scholar Award and the Ellison Medical Foundation New Scholar in Aging Research Award. He is co-founding director of the MBL Biology of Aging Summer Research Course, and organizes several international conferences on geroscience and aging biology.



Jukka-Pekka "JP" Onnela

Jukka-Pekka "JP" Onnela is Professor of Biostatistics and Chair of the Department of Biostatistics at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health of Harvard University. He is also Co-Director of the Master's Program in Health Data Science. His research focuses on developing statistical and computational methods for studying social and biological networks and digital phenotyping, the use of data from personal digital devices to quantify human behavior and health in real-world settings. He has used mobile-phone data to study social behavior since 2004 and received an NIH Director's New Innovator Award in 2013 for his work in digital phenotyping. Before joining Harvard, he was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School, a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Harvard Kennedy School, and a Junior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. He earned his doctorate from Helsinki University of Technology (now Aalto University). He is a Member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters.



Courtney Peterson

Courtney Peterson is an Associate Professor in Nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Director of the Harvard-Chan Research Kitchen. She is an internationally recognized researcher in the field of intermittent fasting. Dr. Peterson conducted the first controlled feeding trial of intermittent fasting in humans and was the first to test a form of intermittent fasting called early time-restricted eating (early TRE) in humans. Her research has shown that intermittent fasting induces weight loss, alters hunger, improves blood sugar levels, lowers blood pressure, decreases oxidative stress, activates nutrient-sensing pathways, increases autophagy, slows epigenetic aging, and improves metabolic flexibility, and that many of these effects are independent of weight loss. She currently leads several clinical trials on intermittent fasting, including some of the largest studies in patients with type 2 diabetes, prediabetes, and cancer, as well as a trial in healthy adults to see whether intermittent fasting can slow aging in humans. Dr. Peterson is also interested in diet quality and food-as-medicine, particularly approaches to induce type 2 diabetes remission. Her research has been featured in more than 150 media outlets, including NBC Nightly News, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Good Morning America, and the BBC, and has reached a circulation of more than 104 million people.



Daniel Promislow

Daniel Promislow received his doctorate at Oxford University in 1990. It was during this time that he developed an interest in the evolution of aging, including a focus on differences in lifespan across species. In 1995, he joined the Department of Genetics at the University of Georgia, moving to the University of Washington in 2013, and then in 2024 relocated to the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston. Dr. Promislow brings a highly interdisciplinary approach to his studies on aging in genetically variable populations, with the goal of understanding both how and why individuals differ in patterns of aging within and across species. To explore these questions, Dr. Promislow uses a broad array of approaches (fly experiments, genetics, metabolomics, cross-specific comparative studies, computational & statistical methods, mathematical theory) and a wide range of species (from fruit flies and marmosets, to companion dogs and humans). Dr. Promislow has been recognized with numerous awards, including an Ellison Medical Foundation Senior Scholar in Aging Award, a Breakthroughs in Gerontology Award, the Glenn Research Award from the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research, and the Bennet J. Cohen award in aging research. He has been named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Aging Association, the Gerontological Society of America, and the Academy of Geroscience. Dr. Promislow is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Dog Aging Project, an NIH-funded longitudinal study of over 50,000 pet dogs, designed to identify the biological, environmental and lifestyle determinants of healthy aging.



Marc Weisskopf

Marc Weisskopf is the Cecil K. and Philip Drinker Professor of Environmental Epidemiology and Physiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in the departments of Environmental Health and Epidemiology, Director of the Harvard T.H. Chan NIEHS Center for Environmental Health, and Director of Epidemiological Studies for the Football Players Health Study at Harvard. Dr. Weisskopf's research interest is in how environmental factors affect the nervous system, as well as the epidemiology of neurologic disorders. Current areas of his work include how environmental exposures relate to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), mental health, Cognitive function/Alzheimer's disease (AD), and

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). His neuroscience work focuses on molecular and cellular aspects of neural signaling and plasticity. His epidemiological work focuses on the influence of environmental exposures on brain health across the life course. In particular, his research focuses on environmental risk factors for outcomes such as autism spectrum disorders, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, cognitive function and dementia, and psychiatric conditions. Dr. Weisskopf also explores epidemiological methods issues to improve causal inference from observational environmental health studies.

Poster Session

Lara Bister, Visiting Scholar, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies

Evidence for a sex-specific pathway of stress transmission: maternal mental illness predicts elevated C-reactive protein in girls

Michele Cerasuolo, Research Fellow, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Shaping plasticity in Alzheimer's disease: modulation of network-to-network connectivity via cortico-cortical paired associative stimulation

Xin Fang, PhD Candidate, Environmental Health, Harvard Chan School

Natural menopause timing and epigenetic aging in a prospective cohort and mendelian randomization analyses

Rosie (Liangyi) Jin, SM80 Student, Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School

Blood-based biomarker-derived cognitive resilience and risk of cognitive impairment, functional decline, and mortality

Minjae Kim, DrPH Student and Prajna Leadership Fellow, Harvard Chan School

Na Li, Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Student, Columbia University School of Nursing

The people who never reach the clock: a denominator-first framework for evaluating nutrition assistance and healthy aging

Denise Kohlhepp, DPhil Researcher in Medical Sciences, University of Oxford

Early-life physical activity, decision-making, and emotional health: a life-course perspective on healthy aging

Toshiaki Komura, PhD Student, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard Chan School

Co-occurrence of morbidities between spouses in the United States, 1998 and 2022

Wilson Lam, MPH Student, Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School

Giles Xu, MS Student, Biostatistics, Harvard Chan School

Longitudinal impact of multimorbidity on cognitive trajectories across racial and ethnic groups

Chenshuang Li, Postdoctoral Fellow, Environmental Health, Harvard Chan School

Exposome-wide association study and predictive risk score for incident Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

Colleen McGrath, Postdoctoral Fellow, Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School

Laura Chen, PhD Student, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard Chan School

Reappraise, don't suppress? Emotion regulation and healthy aging

Quentin Moliterno, Clinical Research Coordinator, Department of Psychiatry/Psychology, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Extension School

Enhancing coping self-efficacy and reducing social isolation in senior living community residents: a mixed-methods analysis of a randomized controlled trial

Chris Morrow, Postdoctoral Fellow, Molecular Metabolism, Harvard Chan School

An organism-level model of subcellular architecture across aging reveals a midlife architectural state shift

Abigail Palaza, MPH Student, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard Chan School

Prosocial behavior for dementia protection in older adulthood

Sarah Brooks Payne, MPH Student, Health Policy and Management, Harvard Chan School

Making dementia conversations easier: a human-centered, point-of-care approach for primary care

Jacob Solomon, Clinical Research Coordinator, Department of Psychiatry, Health Promotion and Resiliency Intervention Research Center

Methodology of a pilot randomized controlled trial assessing a multidomain lifestyle brain health intervention

Justin Waletich, Research fellow, Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School

Characterizing aging and longevity in clams

Elizabeth M. Waldron, Instructor and Staff Psychologist, Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

"It's so important for all of us to keep moving, in whatever fashion, whatever way you do it": determinants of health behavior engagement in senior independent living communities

Halim Yoon, Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Population and Development Studies, Harvard Chan School

The effects of a rising full retirement age on health in later life

Dogacan Yucel, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Cardiology, Boston Children's Hospital

Epigenetic regulation of cardiomyocyte aging

Huan Yun, Postdoctoral Fellow, Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School

Plasma metabolomic signatures of healthy diets and healthspan: an integrative analysis of metabolomics and genetics among 12,478 US adults with 32 years of follow-up

Yiwen Zhu, Postdoctoral Fellow, Epidemiology, Harvard Chan School

A psychological distress-linked plasma metabolite score predicts cognitive aging