Subject: Request for Pilot Study Proposals

The Duke Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) Pilot Studies Program in Aging Research

Background
The Duke Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) (NIA P30 AG028716-01) aims to enhance and support research and promote research career development in aging research through its Core resources. The central theme of our OIAC, based in the Duke Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development, is to understand and enhance reserve and resilience to promote recovery from stressors in late life. The three Research Cores include: 1) Analysis Core, which provides statistical and technical support for projects as well as furthering statistical and analytical science, 2) Molecular Measures Core, which provides comprehensive biomarkers phenotyping to characterize biochemical, metabolic and genetic bases for aging research and 3) Physical Measures Core which provides expertise, devices, equipment and protocols for functional, physical and psychological measures.

Objective
The objective of this solicitation is to seek the highest quality pilot studies in aging research from within Duke University Medical Center. The scope of the Pilot Studies Core includes, but is not limited to, feasibility studies (i.e., for interventions or other research methodology), development of new methodologies or technologies, analysis of existing data, and exploration of high risk but innovative ideas.

Studies of Interest
We are especially interested in studies that relate to our focus on “Enhancing Physical Reserve and Resilience to Promote Recovery from Late Life Stressors”. The Center is interested in research on mechanisms and interventions that relate to older adults’ resilience, which we define as the ability to maintain or recover physical function or “bounce back” following health stressors or injury. Potential topic areas include but are not limited to:

--Acute stressors or threats to physical activity and independence (e.g., surgery, anesthesia, cardiovascular events, falls and fractures, infections)
--Measurement of functional reserve or physiological resilience in older persons.
--Causes, prevention and treatment of episodes of functional decline.
--Factors that promote recovery of function or health (at the person-level or tissue/organ level), or the ability to resist functional decline in the face of stressors or challenges
--The effect of age on physiological resilience
--Interactions of multiple diseases, disabilities, and interventions in older persons, and their relationship to risk of morbidity, progression of disability, and efficacy of prevention or treatment strategies.

The proposed study may involve any level of inquiry including molecular, animal model, patient-oriented, and population-based research. Studies that evaluate psychosocial resilience, which do not also address an aspect of physical health/independence, may not fall within the scope of our Center. Pilot studies are expected to utilize OAIC Research Core expertise and resources. (See https://sites.duke.edu/centerforaging/claude-d-pepper-older-americans-independence-center/cores/ for core descriptions).
Investigators are strongly encouraged to contact the OAIC Pilot Studies Core Leader to discuss project ideas and explore ways to maximize suitability prior to submitting a letter of interest or proposal.

**Duration and Funding**
The duration of the pilot study may be for one or two years. The budget request for pilot studies is $25,000 - $40,000 per year in direct costs.

**Deadlines and Timeline**
Letter of Interest (LOI) and Principal Investigator NIH Biosketch due **Nov 1, 2017**
Applicants will be notified by Dec 15, 2017 if they are invited to submit a full application
Full application will be due **Feb 15, 2018**
Funding decisions will be made by April 15, with funding received Summer 2018.

**Content**
The pilot study LOI should be a maximum of 2 pages and must include the following items:

1) Proposed title of the project; name of principal investigator and key co-investigators
2) Summary of objective, significance, innovation, design/methods
3) Description of how this pilot project is likely to enable future external funding
4) Relevance to the OAIC theme of physical resilience and reserve and plans to utilize OAIC Cores

Principal investigator’s NIH-style biosketch should be submitted with LOI.

After our review of LOIs, we will notify applicants by Dec 15, 2017 if full application is invited. Full applications will be due Feb 15, 2018 and will include:

1) Scientific Section - Study aims, scientific justification/background, study design and methods, analysis plan, and plans for external funding given the data from the pilot study. Investigators should describe how one or more OAIC Cores would be utilized to accomplish the proposed work and any other resources available to the investigator to ensure the success of the pilot study. This section is limited to no more than 5 pages, Arial 11 point font, not including references.
2) References
3) Investigator NIH Biosketch(s)
4) Budget and Budget Justification

Please send pilot proposals via email to:

Jamazina Smith  
Program Administrator  
Duke Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development  
Box 3003, D.U.M.C.  
Phone: 919-660-7502  
Please contact Ms. Smith for any administrative questions

For programmatic questions, please contact:

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