INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Newsletter

Issue no: 1   March 2023

The International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU)

The International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), established in 2006, is a network of eleven international research-intensive universities from nine countries across the globe. The eleven members share similar values, a global vision and a commitment to educating future world leaders. Central to these values is the importance of academic diversity and international collaboration as reflected in IARU's principles.

IARU UNIVERSITIES

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

The International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU) is a collaboration between 11 of the world's leading research-intensive universities. The members are: the Australian National University, ETH Zurich, National University of Singapore, Peking University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Cambridge, University of Cape Town, University of Copenhagen, University of Oxford, the University of Tokyo and Yale University.

Newsletter
The IARU ALH Early Career Researcher Network

Contents

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

The IARU Ageing, Longevity &Health

The IARU Aging, Longevity & Health initiative is one of the earliest joint research initiatives formed by the Alliance in 2006, jointly led by the University of Copenhagen (Center for Healthy Aging) and University of Oxford (Oxford Institute of Population Ageing).

The group examines this 21st century issue with a multidisciplinary approach. The initiative encompasses biological, psycho-social, cultural and public health policy issues arising from changing human population age demographics and the global human longevity transition. The current chair is Prof. Angelique Chan (National University of Singapore).

ALH Steering Group

Since 2014, an IARU ALH Steering Group has been heading the initiative. The Steering Group intends to meet once per year. The members are (as of February 2022):

- Prof. Lene Juel Rasmussen, University of Copenhagen
- Prof. Nicolas Cherbuin, Australian National University
- Dr. Benedikt Helgason, ETH Zürich
- Prof. Angelique Chan, National University of Singapore
- Dr. Ikuko Sugawara, The University of Tokyo
- Dr. Louise Lafortune, University of Cambridge
- Prof. Sarah Harper, University of Oxford
- Prof. David Lindeman, University of California, Berkeley
- Prof. Gong Chen, Peking University
- Prof. Marc Combrinck, University of Cape Town

The mission of the Steering Group is: to facilitate exchange of ideas and collaborative interdisciplinary research projects on human aging among IARU ALH researchers at IARU member universities.

The Oxford Institute of
Population Ageing

Editor's Introduction: It gives me great pleasure to share with you the first issue of the International Alliance of Research Universities, Ageing Longevity & Health Early Career Researcher newsletter. This newsletter is a vehicle which disseminates the academic activities, outputs, and all things related to the IARU ALH ECRs. It provides a platform for ECRs and beyond to understand more about members' research, to disseminate upcoming events (such as conferences, funding or working opportunities, and so on), and to provide reflections on the academic events. We aim to issue the newsletter quarterly. Contributions from readers and all members are always warmly welcomed! If you would like to share your news for future issues or subscribe to the newsletter, please feel free to contact me — Dr. Yanan Zhang (University of Oxford, yanan.zhang@ageing.ox.ac.uk).

The IARU ALH Early Career Researcher Network

Since the 2022 IARU Ageing Longevity and Health Research Conference, Early Career Researchers (ECRs), consisting of young to mid-level researchers from various research-intensive universities, have agreed upon forming an IARU ALH ECR Network to bridge sharing of expertise and international collaborations. The IARU ALH ECR Network is a platform that connects young researchers of cross-disciplinary fields to share ideas, foster close collaborations and support each other's academic careers. The network provides opportunities for professional development and collaboration to encourage ECRs to establish themselves in their respective field. Through sharing of expertise, quarterly seminars and networking events, members of the network build relationships with peers, gain greater insight into academic research practices and foster strong collaborations globally. The IARU ALH ECR Network aims to become a supportive community that fosters the growth and development of future ECRs, driving innovation and promoting impactful research among the next generation of researchers.

The current chair is Dr. Yanan Zhang. We have a public engagement team consisting of Dr. Zhiquan Li, Vanessa Koh Jean Wen, Dr. Pildoo Sung, and Dr. Yanan Zhang. They are working on the website, newsletter, and Twitter for the ECR network.

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The IARU ALH Early Career Researcher Network members

Dr. Zhiquan Li
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Biography
Zhiquan Li is a PostDoc from the Center for Healthy Aging at the University of Copenhagen. His research focuses on identifying novel longevity regulators downstream of FOXO transcription factors, testing natural small molecules that slow aging, and investigating the roles of mitochondria, DNA damage response, and autophagy in aging and Alzheimer's disease using cell and Drosophila models.

Dr. Anthony Howarth
University of Oxford, England

Biography

Dr. Anthony Howarth is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Population Ageing, a Research Associate at University College, and a Research Affiliate at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford. His current research focuses on how the relationship between design, place-making, and intergenerational living might enable healthy ageing through improving well-being and tackling loneliness. Before this appointment, his work mainly centred on Travellers and Gypsies with a particular focus on the social, material, and familial dynamics of place-making. Anthony formerly worked at Oxford's School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography.
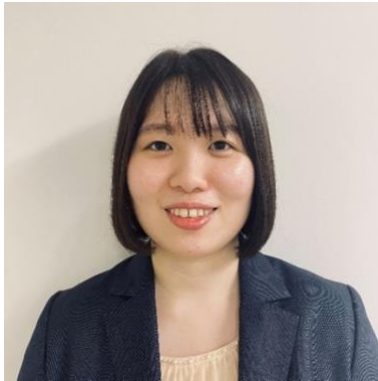

Dr. Erin Walsh
Population Health Exchange, Australian National University

Biography

Erin Walsh has a PhD in psychology, and has a multidisciplinary research career spanning the fields of psychology, visual science communication, biology (focus on brain morphometrics), and human health (focus on brain ageing). She is currently based in the population health exchange, a multidisciplinary team that connects population health to social, environmental, political and economic drivers to provide better understanding of, and inform implementation of effective action on emerging health problems. Alongside research, she works as a scientific illustrator, offering assistance with stimuli preparation, data visualization, and figure preparation for scholarly publication or engaging the general public with science.

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Haruno Suzuki
University of Tokyo, Japan

Biography
Haruno Suzuki is a PhD student in nursing and a research fellow under a global leadership program for an age-friendly society at the University of Tokyo. She has a master's degree in Health Science and a bachelor's degree in Nursing Science. Prior to enrolling at the University of Tokyo, she has work experience at an acute care hospital and a long-term care facility to provide care for older adults as a registered nurse in Japan. Currently, she belongs to a research project to build a dementia-friendly community. Her master thesis was regarding the effects of a dementia educational program using virtual reality technology. Her research interests include care for older adults with disabilities, age-friendly community, dementia care, and healthy aging.

Haoyu Suo
The Institute of Population Research, Peking University

Biography
As an early career researcher, Haiyu Suo has published several peer-reviewed articles, and presented several conference papers about social participation among older adults and people with disability, and older adults care services in China. He has won 'National Merit Scholarship' for three times (Doctor's\Master's\bachelor's) awarded by Chinese Ministry of Education His research interests mainly include social gerontology, social services for older adults, disability and aging health, particularly: (a) Age-friendly city/community; (b) Social participation among the elderly; (c) Timebanking development in China; and (d) Disability inclusion.

Neo Kazembe
University of Tokyo, Japan

Biography
Neo Kazembe is a PhD student in international health and a research fellow under a global leadership program for an age-friendly society at the University of Tokyo. She has a master's degree in health sciences and a Bachelor of Science degree in statistics and demography. Before joining the University of Tokyo, she worked for two non-governmental organizations in Malawi, monitoring and evaluating public health-related projects implemented at community and health facility levels.

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Dr. Joyce Coker
University of Cambridge, England

Biography
Dr. Joyce Coker is a Research Associate at Cambridge Public Health, University of Cambridge, England. She has a background in Human Physiology and Public Health. During her PhD (University of Leeds, 2015), she used a mixed method approach to examine the influence of statin-use on the health beliefs and health behaviours of adults at risk of cardiovascular disease in South Yorkshire, England and in urban and semi-urban cities in Nigeria.
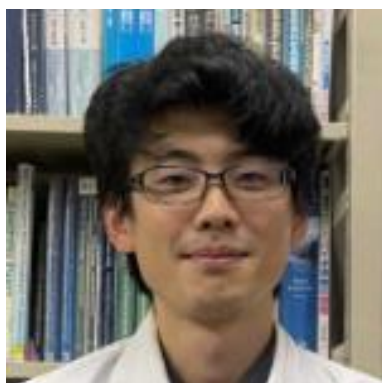
Dr. Linn Gillberg
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Biography
Linn Gillberg is a Postdoc in the research group Xlab at the Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Copenhagen. The research group is part of Center for Healthy Aging and the UNIK program. Linn Gillberg is a translational researcher who studied epigenetic, transcriptional and mitochondrial changes in type 2 diabetes, leukemia and breast cancer patients.
Linn is currently investigating how chemo- and radiation therapy affect metabolic health and risk of type 2 diabetes in women with breast cancer. Her research aim to elucidate how epigenetic mechanisms interact with the genome and lifestyle/medical exposures in the progression of complex age-related diseases.

Yutaro Uehara
University of Tokyo, Japan

Biography
PhD student in Water Environmental Technology Lab, Dept of Urban Eng., Grad of Eng., UT/ WINGS-CFS research fellowship/JSPS research fellowship/ member of Japan MENSA. His major is environmental engineering. He has been working on analysis and research on water quality, especially dissolved organic matter, for more than 10 years since he was a junior high school student. In recent years, he has received several awards for his work on the comprehensive DOM analysis by LC/MS.

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RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Melina Mali
University of Oxford, England

Biography
Dr. Melina Malli joined the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing in 2022 as a Research Fellow. She previously worked as a researcher with qualitative expertise in various National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funded projects that aimed to improve social care practice and services for marginalised groups - in particular individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At the heart of these projects, Melina explored people's sense of identity and belonging within the community; intergroup contact to form better and more accepting communities, and combat isolation and loneliness has also been central to her work.
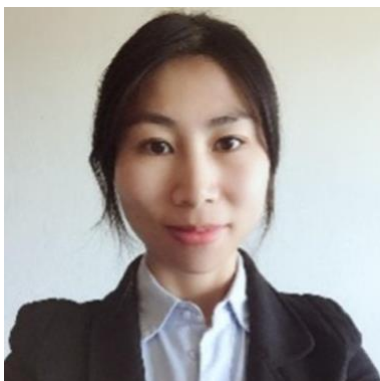
Dr. Pildoo Sung
National University of Singapore

Biography
As sociologist, Dr. Pildoo Sung has been studying whether and to what extent social roles and relationships influence health and well-being, applying advanced quantitative methods to various multinational and panel survey data. At CARE, Pildoo is involved in multiple projects in need of complex data analysis, including the Centre's longitudinal survey on older Singaporeans (THE SIGNS Study) and the evaluation of a community-based Dementia Care System (Cognition).

Dr. Yuan Li
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Biography
My name is Yuan Li. I got my PhD and trained in a stem cell biology lab, and I have twelve years of experience working with stem cells, now has been working 2,5 years with my Post doc at Copenhagen University's Center for Healthy Aging as part of the Challenge project financed by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. I am passionate about using the stem cell-differentiated cellular models to address the underlying mechanism of the most common neurodegenerative disorder-Alzheimer's disease.

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Vanessa Koh Jean Wen
National University of Singapore

Biography
Vanessa is a PhD student in the Centre for Aging Research and Education within the Health Services and Systems Research programme at Duke-NUS Medical School. She was awarded the Duke-NUS PhD Fellowship for the PhD in Integrated Biology and Medicine. Prior to joining Duke-NUS Medical School, she accumulated research experience at the Structural Biology Lab in Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She conducted studies characterising novel ligands targeting specific markers of Parkinson's Disease.

She also joined the Population/Global Health Research Programme to further understand the aetiology of diseases and potential treatment targets through the lens of molecular epidemiology. Vanessa continues to pursue her interest in aging and population health by focusing on falls among older adults in the community. At present, she is interested in designing feasible and sustainable fall intervention programmes from a systems perspective. With 1 in 3 older adults falling at least once a year, fall prevention is a leading public health concern in many aging societies. However, there exists some barriers to fall intervention programmes, from tailoring of programmes to specific risk factors to older adults' inertia towards joining such programmes. As falling is a complex multi-factorial condition, and the implementation of fall intervention programmes involves a broad set of complexities, it is imperative to address this issue from a whole systems perspective. This involves multistakeholder engagement to conceptualise a shared mental model on falls. Studies will be conducted to validate hypotheses and formulate recommendations for the design of future fall intervention programmes and policies.

Dr. Yanan Zhang
University of Oxford, England

Biography
Dr Yanan Zhang is a quantitative research fellow at the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing and a research associate at University College Oxford. Her research involves the creation of an evidence base for positive interventions in support of population ageing. She previously worked as a social care economist for the ESRC funded 'Sustainable Care: Connecting People and Systems'. She conducts research on the costs of social care in terms of economy, health, and well-being, primarily through the analysis of large-scale longitudinal survey data, often presenting her results internationally, directly contributing to key policy debates.

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF
RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Xinyin Xu
Academic Visitor at University of Oxford, England

Biography
Dr Xinyin Xu was an Academic Visitor at the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing in 2022. She was also a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Global Health & Social Medicine at King's College London. She is the deputy director of the Non-communicable diseases (NCD) department of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Sichuan Province, China.

Dr Xu is mainly engaged in NCD and nutritional epidemiology. She leads a team of health specialists and is responsible for monitoring NCD trends in Sichuan Province. She also leads numerous evaluation projects on NCD & Nutrition and has been involved in the design of prevention and control of NCD at both the provincial and national levels. Associate Professor Xu published extensively in both Chinese and English in the field of nutrition and epidemiology, five co-author books (two as chief editor, three as associate editor) and many government report. She was awarded the Academic Leader Reserve by the Bureau of Health in Sichuan Province, China, in 2020.

Dr. Sarah Assaad
University of Cambridge, University College London, England

Biography

Sarah is a Research Fellow in Cognitive Ageing and Dementia Epidemiology at University College London. Her research focuses on understanding the association between change in cognition and various socio-economic, social, and physical health factors in older age as part of the ELSA-HCAP project. She received the Cambridge Trust scholarship to pursue her PhD degree at the University of Cambridge, UK (2018-2022), analysing data from the CC75C study. She won the Emerging scholar Awards at the Ageing and Social Change Conferences (2019 and 2021) and successfully defended her thesis in May 2022. Her PhD research contributed to the derivation of a first longitudinal index of social wellbeing and a better understanding of the association between social health and the use of health and social care services in older age. Sarah also holds a BS in Medical Laboratory Sciences (2013) and a Master in Public Health with emphasis on Epidemiology and Biostatistics (2015) from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. She coordinated the implementation of the first 10/66 dementia cohort study in Lebanon (2016-2017) and contributed to the dissemination of findings in peer-reviewed articles and local and international conference presentations. For a full list of publications and scientific presentations, please refer to Sarah's CV.

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Working Papers

Dr. Pildoo Sung:

- Son, Joonmo and Pildoo Sung. "The Relationship among Generalized Trust, Social Networks, and Social Resources across Thirty Countries."

- Sung, Pildoo, Jeremy Lim Soh, and Rahul Malhotra. "Social Network Types and Depression Among Family Caregivers: The Mediating Role of Psychological Resilience."

- Lee, M-L. June, Pildoo Sung, Kok Yang Tan, Pamela Duncan, Rita Sim, Karen Koh, and Angelique Chan. "Trajectories of Adherence to a Falls Prevention Exercise Intervention in Singapore."

- Sung, Pildoo, Jeremy Lim Soh, and Angelique Chan. "Health Profiles among Community Dwelling Older Adults with Cognitive Impairment and Their Implications for Caregiving Experience."

Haoyu Suo:

- "Smart Healthcare: Progress and Innovation in China", China Renmin University Press (a book Chapter).

- "Self-rated health analysis and prediction based on Logistic and machine learning for rural elderly in Hunan, China".

Dr. Yanan Zhang:

- Loneliness and living arrangements: the role of co-resident children's gender.

Publications and Accepted Papers

Dr. Pildoo Sung:

- Sung, Pildoo, Arthur Chia, Rahul Malhotra, and Angelique Chan. 2023. "Reciprocal Relationship Between Lifelong Learning and Volunteering." The Journals of Gerontology, Series B. Online first. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbad003

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- Sung, Pildoo, June May-Ling Lee, and Angelique Chan. 2022. "Lonely in a Crowd: Social Isolation Profiles and Caregiver Burden Among Family Caregivers of Community-dwelling Older Adults with Cognitive Impairment." Journal of Aging and Health. Online first. https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643221137939

- Son, Joonmo and Pildoo Sung. 2022. "Reciprocal Relationship Between Social Engagement and Cognitive Health." Journal of Applied Gerontology. Online first. https://doi.org/10.1177/07334648221148953

Dr. Xinyin Xu:

- Chief editor for the book "Report on Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease Surveillance in Sichuan 2019 (in Chinese)", published in December 2022.

- "Association of socioeconomic status with glycated haemoglobin level and risk factors for diabetic retinopathy: a cross-sectional study in Sichuan, western China" accepted by BMJ Open.

Haruno Suzuki

- Suzuki, H., Igarashi, A., Sakai, S., Sakka, M., Takaoka, M., Matsumoto, H., Ito, K., Kugai, H., & Yamamoto-Mitani, N. "Effects of a dementia educational program to experience the first-person perspective among nursing students: a prospective observational study (in Japanese)". Accepted by the Japanese Society for Dementia Care.

Dr. Zhiquan Li

- Chapter 10 – "Genomic Instability and Ageing" in *Ageing from Fundamental Biology to Societal Impac*t. https://www.sciencedirect.com/book/9780128237618/aging

Recent Funding

- Dr. Joyce Coker submitted a grant application to NIHR School of Public Health Research public mental health programme. The grant application has been accepted and began on the 2nd of Jan 2023. This grant aims to use a combination of theory of change methodology and realist evaluation methodology to explore the role digital assets and virtual spaces used by community organisations play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of communities, particularly marginalised populations who are more likely to experience inequalities and digital exclusion.

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- Dr. Sarah Assaad submitted a grant application to the 'Reconnect Travel Grant – Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and the UK' to collaborate with colleague at Pusan National University, South Korea https://www.britishcouncil.hk/en/programmes/education/reconnect-travel-grant and it was accepted in March 2023. The grant will cover travel expenses of collaborating researchers from Dr. Assaad's team based at University College London and Pusan National University, Korea between April 2023 and February 2024. The aim is to share lessons learned from methodological challenges and solutions in the implementation of longitudinal ageing studies in both settings.

- Dr. Xinyin Xu was rewarded a funding by the Science and Technology Department of Sichuan Province, China. The research programme is "Diabetes? Su Dongpo and other historical celebrity talk about the Sichuan Cuisine and lowering Sugar, making Chinese-Tibetan bilingual popular science videos based on the dietary patterns of Sichuan people", 2023 - 2025.

- Dr. Xinyin Xu was rewarded a funding by the Bureau of Health in Sichuan Province, China. The research programme is "Research on personalized management technology for middle-aged and elderly people with type 2 diabetes based on Sichuan dietary patterns and digital methods", 2023 - 2025.

Conferences/Workshops

Haruno Suzuki:

- Presented at the 42nd Annual Conference of Japan Academy of Nursing Science, Hiroshima, Japan, with the paper "The effectiveness of an educational program for nursing students using audio-visual materials to experience the first-person perspective of people living with dementia (in Japanese)" in December 2022.

- Will give a poster presentation at the 26th East Asian Forum of Nursing Scholars: EAFONS conference, Tokyo, Japan, with the paper "The feasibility of telehealth video assessment for community-dwelling older adults using interRAI assessment during COVID-19 pandemic" in March 2023.

Dr. Pildoo Sung:

- Presented at the Gerontological Society of America 2022 Annual Scientific Meeting, Indianapolis, US. (2-6 November 2022)

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- Presented at the 12th Association of Pacific Rim Universities Populating Ageing Conference 2022 (10-11 November 2022)

- Presented at the 95th Annual Meeting of the Japan Sociological Society, Osaka, Japan. (12-13 November 2022)

- Presented at the Korean Sociological Association 2022 Annual Meeting, Seoul, Korea. (16-17 December 2022)

- Submitted a paper to the Gerontological Society of America 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa, FL, US (November 8-12, 2023)

- Submitted a paper to XX ISA World Congress of Sociology, Melbourne, Australia (25 June – 1 July 2023) and the paper has been accepted.

- Will attend the Population Association of Singapore 2023 Annual Meeting, Singapore. (11-12 May 2023)

Yutaro Uehara:

- Presented at the JSME 35th conference with the paper "Identifying growth substrates for *Escherichia coli* in urban river water using high-resolution LC-MS" in October 2022 (original title: 河川水中に溶存する大腸菌増殖基質の高分解能 LC/MS を用いたスクリーニング).

- Presented at the JSCE 59th conference with the paper "Investigating the impact of non-volatile salt residue resulting from sample pre-treatment by freeze-drying and rotary evaporation on LC-MS analysis" in November 2022 (original title: 凍結乾燥および蒸発濃縮による試料前処理に伴う不揮発性塩の残留が LC/MS 分析に及ぼす影響).

Vanessa Koh Jean Wen:

- Attended an exciting group model-building workshop with prominent clinician-scientists on fall research in Singapore in Jan 2023

- Attended the global young scientist summit 2023 in January and highly recommended this event.

- Submitted an abstract to the 18th European Society of Medical Decision-Making Conference, "Linking Research to Evidence-Based Action for Patients, Providers and Policy Decision Makers" (Germany, March 2023). https://www.smdmmeeting.org/

- Submitted an abstract to the 41st Systems Dynamics Conference. The 2023 Conference theme is "Adapting in the Face of Change" (Chicago, USA, 23-27 July). https://systemdynamics.org/event/2023-international-system-dynamics-conference/

Dr. Xinyin Xu:

- Attended the IDF (International Diabetes Federation) World Diabetes Congress 2022, Portugal, December 2022.

Haoyu Suo:

- Presented at the First Summit Forum on Volunteering and Public Welfare Services for seniors (organized by the China Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, CAGG)，with the paper "Empowering Intergenerational Inclusion through Senior Volunteer Service: The Practice Experience and Inspiration of the Baltimore Experience Corps in the United States" in December 2022 (in Chinese).

Dr. Joyce Coker:

- Submitted papers to the 6th Transforming Care conference 2023 (26th-28th June, Sheffield). Titles of paper: "The double-edged sword of care migration: how ageing both 'here' and 'at home' affects older Nigerians" and "Aging and the care of older people in Nigeria: persistent inequalities and future prospects".

Dr. Yanan Zhang:

- Convened a seminar series at the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, titled "Methodological Advances in Social and Health Care Research" (January to March 2023).

- Gave a presentation with the paper "A lost decade? A renewed case for adult social care reform in England" at the Peking University Institute of Population Research on the 16th of February 2023.

Upcoming Events

- Dementia Translation conference March 2023, London, UK
  https://www.dementiasplatform.uk/research-hub/translation-2023/programme

- Alzheimer's Research UK Conference 2023, Aberdeen and online
  https://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/research/for-researchers/research-conference/

- Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC), July 16-20, 2023, Alzheimer's Association, Amsterdam, Netherlands and online https://aaic.alz.org/

- Society of Social Medicine Public Health (SSMPH) Conference Sep 6-8, 2023, Newcastle, England, UK https://socsocmed.org.uk/

- 2023 Transforming Care Conference, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK, June 26-28th http://www.transforming-care.net/2023-transforming-care-conference/

- The International Conference on Frailty and Sarcopenia Research, Toulouse, France, March 22-24, 2023. https://frailty-sarcopenia.com/

- Dr. Erin Walsh will give a seminar on mapping literature. More details will be sent out in due course.

News and Calls

- Dr. Zhiquan Li is the guest editor for the Frontiers in Ageing Neuroscience with the research topic "Targeting the Ageing Mitochondria: Mechanisms, Methods, and Therapeutic Strategies". Please distribute the call among your network: https://www.frontiersin.org/research-topics/51909/targeting-the-aging-mitochondria-mechanisms-methods-and-therapeutic-strategies (**Action required!**)

- We are going to build a committee team for the ECR network. If you are interested, please contact Yanan (yanan.zhang@ageing.ox.ac.uk) (**Action required!**)

- In the first IARU ALH ECR meeting, a public engagement team was inaugurated, consisting of Vanessa, Pildoo, Zhiquan, and Yanan.

- Led by Zhiquan, our media engagement team have already started building the ECR network's website. The website will represent a platform which disseminates our academic activities and provides useful information to ECRs and the public (such as funding opportunities and upcoming conferences). We are seeking at least one coordinator in each country or region (where our IARU universities locate) in order to gather and distribute the information. Please feel free to join us if you are interested! If you are aware of any interesting events, funding opportunities, or things that are otherwise valuable to share, please do update us. All such input will make a great difference and contribute to this being an infinitely more valuable resource! (**Action required!**)

- Dr Sarah Assaad created a LinkedIn page for our ECR network; feedback is welcomed: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12780025/ (**Action required!**)

- Dr Sarah Assaad started her full-time research fellowship position at UCL from December 2022 – working on the ELSA-HCAP project: https://www.elsa-project.ac.uk/hcap

Acknowledgement

We are very grateful for all the members' enthusiasm and passion for the ECR network. Without your input, our first Newsletter will not be possible. We gave special thanks to Zhiquan, who has spent a lot of time making the website and setting up the Slack group; to Vanessa, who wrote up the introduction for the ECR network; to Sarah, who set up the LinkedIn page for our ECR network and proofread the Newsletter; to Marija who has always been there when we had enquiries and made detailed notes for every meeting. Lastly, we would like to thank the IARU ALH steering group for providing such a great platform and the secretariat team for their support.