



The Deane F. Johnson Center for Neurotherapeutics at UCLA

Melodies and Memories: A Musical Night to Remember

The night was magical and music was pitch perfect. The Deane F. Johnson Alzheimer's Research Foundation hosted "Melodies and Memories," an evening under the stars with Michael Feinstein and Linda Eder on July 16, 2006. The evening began with dinner at the Los Angeles Zoo followed by a concert at the Greek Theater. The event was topped off by a dessert reception with Michael and Linda. Michael is a four-time Grammy Award-nominee pianist and vocalist who is credited with renewing the popularity of the repertoire of the Great American Songbook. Linda is a vocalist and Broadway star who has released several successful albums and has starred in the Broadway show "Jekyll & Hyde." The concert was a smashing success in raising funds and increasing awareness for The Deane F. Johnson Center for Neurotherapeutics (JCNT) at UCLA.



JCNT Founder, Kate Edelman Johnson, with Michael Feinstein and Linda Eder

A Look at Fall Conference: “Advances in Neurologic and Neuropsychiatric Therapies”

The Johnson Center for Neurotherapeutics sponsored its annual Continuing Medical Education (CME) conference, “*Advances in Neurologic and Neuropsychiatric Therapies*,” on November 4, 2006 at the lovely Marriott Marina Del Rey in California.

The primary objective for this conference was to improve the level



JCNT Director, Jeffrey L. Cummings, MD, and JCNT Founder, Kate Edelman Johnson

of neurological and psychiatric care provided to patients in the community by updating practitioners on advances in neurotherapeutics. In just a few years, there have been remarkable changes in the availability of treatments for neurological and psychiatric illnesses. New therapies have become available for sleep disorders, depression, psychosis and agitation, pain syndromes, and pseudobulbar palsy.

This conference was well attended by approximately 100 physicians who came to hear top UCLA researchers lecture on the latest advances in neurotherapeutics.

Fifty and Forward: Celebrating 50 Years at UCLA

Fifty and Forward, the year-long celebration of the UCLA Department of Neurology’s 50th anniversary, officially kicked off in March with a dinner event that included presentations and tours of the new Neuroscience Research Building. Although the celebration is commemorating five decades of excellence in neurology research and patient care at UCLA, the focus is on looking ahead. “In the last 25 years, basic research in neuroscience has provided an enormous wealth of insights into how the nervous system functions and how it fails in disease-and, given the ever accelerating pace at which we are obtaining new knowledge, we are likely to learn more in the next five years than we learned in the last 50,” says John Mazziotta, MD, PhD, department chair and Stark Professor of Neurology. “Now, we are poised to convert many of these laboratory observations into new technologies and treatments that will significantly improve the lives of patients with neurological disorders.”

With funding from the National Institutes of Health tightening, the Department is increasingly reliant on private philanthropy to help advance research. An important part of the anniversary campaign is the effort to build on the Partners in Discovery program, which invites committed individuals in the community and private sector to help increase awareness and raise funds that will support research, education, and patient care for the Department’s mission.

The kick-off event is being followed by a series of meetings of supporters throughout the year, culminating in a gala to thank volunteers for their assistance. “People are contributing in any way they can-whether it’s their money, their time, or their expertise,” says Dr. Mazziotta. “This support is a strong testimony to the hope and commitment of these individuals to finding better treatments for themselves, their family members, and their friends, neighbors, and coworkers.”

(PHOTO AND ARTICLE COURTESY OF GARNET JOHNSON)



Sharon Shelton, Kate Edelman Johnson, Christine Tam, Jeffrey L. Cummings, MD, and Sheri Safan, supporters of the UCLA Neurology Partners in Discovery

Latest Research Information on Alzheimer's Disease

In recent years, there has been a growing appreciation of an association of resistance to the effects of insulin (“insulin resistance”) and increased levels of insulin (“hyperinsulinemia”) with Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Specifically, it has been observed that persons with AD have increased levels of peripheral insulin and that having hyperinsulinemia may be a risk factor for the subsequent development of AD. The mechanism by which this occurs is not certain but it has been observed that insulin can increase the accumulation of Abeta, the molecule thought by many to trigger the disease.

Preliminary studies of rosiglitazone, an insulin-sensitizing medication used for the treatment of diabetes, in persons with AD have yielded promising results, suggesting that this medication may slow the progression of AD. In a small study of persons with either early AD or an isolated memory problem suggesting even earlier AD (“mild cognitive impairment” or “MCI”), persons treated with rosiglitazone had better cognitive functioning after 6 months. A larger study demonstrated that a subset of patients with AD (those not carrying a certain genetic marker, ApoE epsilon4) treated with rosiglitazone performed better on a cognitive test after 24 weeks than did those given placebo.

UCLA’s Kagan Alzheimer’s Disease Treatment Development Program is committed to helping find more effective treatments for this devastating disorder. In their efforts to do so, they are engaged in multiple studies either developed at UCLA or in collaboration with other centers through the National Institutes of Health or with the pharmaceutical industry. Among the studies for AD that they are engaged in are two studies of rosiglitazone. One study is enrolling persons with MCI intended to verify and further elaborate the effects of rosiglitazone in this population. They are also going to be performing a study of rosiglitazone in persons with AD in which the effect of genetic sub-type will be analyzed.

For more information about these studies or others, please call them at (310) 794-6191. You can help find the treatment for AD. Visit the UCLA Alzheimer Disease Center website at www.adc.ucla.edu.

JCNT Welcomes Administrative Assistant, Dolly West

JCNT welcomes its newest member, administrative assistant, Dolly West. Ms. West comes to us from UCLA Santa Monica Family Practice office, where she worked for the last seven years. As their clinic referral coordinator, Dolly played a vital part as a patient liaison and improved patient care by guiding patients through their continuum of treatment.



**Dolly West, JCNT
Administrative
Assistant**

Large Scale Study on Parkinson Disease Conducted at JCNT

Parkinson disease (PD) is a chronic, degenerative disorder of the brain. Patients with PD gradually lose their motor abilities and often develop treatment-related side effects that severely affect their quality of life.

The quest for medications that slow the progression of PD or delay the neuronal death that occurs in this disorder has not yet yielded definitive results. Such ‘neuroprotective’ strategies are actively being sought for the treatment of patients with PD. A large, multi-center, placebo-controlled trial of the dopamine agonist, pramipexole (Mirapex), is now underway to examine whether this drug, which treats the symptoms of PD, is also neuroprotective.

JCNT is one of the 89 participating sites in the US, Europe and Japan for this important study sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Dr. Yvette Bordelon of the UCLA Neurology Department is the site principal investigator for the trial. This study will provide important information on the potential neuroprotective properties of pramipexole that may have a huge impact on the treatment of PD by delaying the progression of severe and disabling symptoms.

For more information on this clinical trial, please call the UCLA Movement Disorders Program at (310) 206-2669. Visit the website at: <http://swpadrecc.neurology.ucla.edu/mdisorder/>

Chinese Physicians Attend JCNT-Eisai Meeting on Alzheimer's Disease Centers

A group of physicians from China visited JCNT in November to learn how to establish new Alzheimer's Disease Centers in their own communities.

The two-day long meeting covered topics such as how a center is organized, clinical trials, patient assessments, database operations, imaging technology, and quality assurance.

Lectures were provided by top UCLA Neurology researchers: Jeffrey Cummings, MD, John Ringman, MD, Danny Huang, PhD, George Bartzokis, MD, Liana Apostolova, MD, Po-Haong Lu, PsyD, Harry Vinters, MD, and Greg Cole, PhD. In addition, the Chinese Physicians visited the home of JCNT Founder, Kate Edelman Johnson, and had the opportunity to hear the history of JCNT and how Alzheimer's Disease inspired Ms. Johnson to start her Foundation to battle against this terrible disease.

The meeting was made possible by Eisai Pharmaceuticals, Inc., China.



Chinese physicians at the JCNT-Eisai meeting

JCNT's Current Research Programs

The primary role of JCNT is to promote vital clinical trials research in neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and stroke. The following programs are among the many research studies at JCNT that are currently recruiting for research subjects:

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Stroke
- Parkinson's Disease
- Huntington's Disease
- Lou Gehrig's Disease

You can find out more about our research by reaching us at (310) 206-9485.

Check out JCNT's new website at jcnt.org



The Deane F. Johnson Center for Neurotherapeutics at UCLA

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SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE CENTER HAS FULFILLED ITS MISSION OF SUPPORTING CLINICAL TRIALS, ADVANCING THE SCIENCE OF CLINICAL TRIALS, AND PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ON TREATMENT OF NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES.