

# S+AGE™ Newsline

Volume 3, Issue 3

*Celebrating 24 years of Caring*

Fall 2010

## *Ask the S+AGE™ Pharmacist: Is Fish Oil for me?*

*By Janice Hoffman, PharmD*

Rather than a prescription medication, some physicians and pharmacists may recommend Omega-3 fatty acid supplements also known as Fish Oil. As a natural alternative, Fish Oils can lower body fats (triglycerides), thus potentially decreasing the risk of heart related events.

Fish Oil is a combination of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid). DHA is better for lowering body fats and EPA may have some effect on attention, memory and mood. People taking blood thinning medications (warfarin, ibuprofen, clopidogrel, aspirin and naproxen) with Fish Oil may have an increased risk of bruising/bleeding. Long term use of Fish Oil may deplete Vitamin E – Look at the label to see if Vitamin E has been added to the supplement. Always discuss with your physician and/or pharmacist about the risks and benefits of Fish Oil supplements.

## *The Negative Aspects of Aggressive Treatment at the End-Stages of Dementia*

Dementia has long been viewed as a disease of the mind, overlooking its physical toll. The truth is, dementia is a disease that not only robs the individual of the ability to learn new information and communicate intelligibly, but eventually is associated with a shutdown of the body's critical functions. Why is it important to view dementia as a physical disease?

A new study finds that a lack of family members' understanding of the physical aspects of dementia may result in higher use of aggressive treatment. Harvard researchers studied 323 residents of nursing homes, all with end-stage dementia. During the 18-month study, more than half of the participants died. Of those, 41 percent of subjects received at least one treatment that would be considered "burdensome" during the last 3 months of life. Upon investigation of treatment decisions, researchers found that family members who reported they understood that dementia was progressive and terminal chose aggressive care at a rate of 27 percent. Family members with a lack of understanding chose aggressive care at a rate of 73 percent. Further, the study found that pain control was inadequate with 1 in 4 subjects clearly suffering, though they were unable to verbalize this. Use of aggressive treatment can result in unnecessary painful infections, invasive procedures, broken bones, need for physical restraint and psychological distress for family members.

Part of this problem can be attributed to the underutilization of advance directives. Without clear direction from the patient on how they wish to be treated, family members may be afraid to choose comfort care over more aggressive treatment options. Advance Directives like Powers of Attorney for Health Care ([www.ag.ca.gov/consumers/pdf/AHCDS1.pdf](http://www.ag.ca.gov/consumers/pdf/AHCDS1.pdf)) and Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST—[www.finalchoices.org/polst.php](http://www.finalchoices.org/polst.php)) are simple to complete and legally binding to protect family from having to make the toughest choices. If you or someone you know needs help completing an Advance Directive, call S+AGE™ for help.



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## *What's New at S+AGE™*

### **S+AGE™ Program Director Joins Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center Advisory Council**

S+AGE™ is proud to announce that Program Director, Joy Fruth, was recently selected to participate on the advisory council of the LA Caregiver Resource Center ([lacrc.usc.edu](http://lacrc.usc.edu)). The LA Caregiver Resource Center provides much needed, free services for caregivers that are designed to: reduce stress, increase knowledge and offer respite. Studies have shown that caregivers (when compared to their non-caregiving peers) are at greater risk for a multitude of health problems including: obesity, dementia, depression, and sleep problems, to name a few. It is an honor that S+AGE™ has been given the opportunity to join with the LA Caregiver Resource Center and our other community partners, like Circle of Care Leeza's Place ([www.leezasplace.org](http://www.leezasplace.org)) to bring awareness to the special needs of caregivers and to provide necessary support services.



Joy Fruth, MSW  
S+AGE™ Program Director

### **S+AGE™ Takes its Show on the Road**

During the summer months, S+AGE™ experts provided numerous free presentations to local community groups including Sherman Oaks Senior Housing, Fountainglen at Valencia Senior Apartments, The Village of Sherman Oaks, and the Veterans Administration Elders at Risk Task Force. If you would like to have one of our S+AGE™ experts speak to your community group, contact Joy at S+AGE™ at 818-341-7243.



Dr. David Stern at Fountainglen

### **S+AGE™ to sponsor the Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk**

The Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk is the nation's largest event for raising awareness and funds for Alzheimer's research, care and support. This year, the Memory Walk will be held on November 7 at Century Park in Century City, CA. As always, S+AGE™ will be an exhibitor and sponsor of this event and we welcome your participation. If you would like to be a part of the S+AGE™ team at the Memory Walk, please call Joy at S+AGE™ at (818) 341-7243.

## Meet the S+AGE™ Inter-Disciplinary Team



**Dan Osterweil, MD, Msc Ed., FACP, CMD**, Professor of Medicine at UCLA, is the founder of the Specialized Ambulatory Geriatric Evaluation (S+AGE™). His areas of expertise include cognitive and functional assessment, particularly fall assessment, management of dementia, pressure ulcers and continuous quality improvement in the nursing home. He is the Director of a UCLA training program in Leadership and Management in Geriatrics (LMG) and Associate Director of the Multicampus Program in Geriatrics and Gerontology at UCLA (MPGMG).



After 30 years as an internist and gastroenterologist in private practice, **Dr. David H. Stern, MD** returned to UCLA Medical Center for additional training to become a specialist in the practice of geriatric medicine. He is Board certified in internal medicine, gastroenterology, and geriatric medicine. Dr. Stern is currently the associate medical director of S+AGE™ and a Clinical Instructor at the UCLA Department of Medicine, Geriatric Division.



**Annette Swain, Ph.D., ABPP** is a Neuropsychologist at S+AGE™. Initially trained at the Benton Neuropsychology Laboratory at the University of Iowa and later at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute and Hospital, she is now an Associate Clinical Professor at the UCLA Department of Psychology. Dr. Swain is Board Certified in Clinical Psychology. Her areas of expertise include neuropsychological and psychodiagnostic assessment of geriatric, neurological, general medical, and psychiatric patients.



**Jennifer Watson, Ph.D.**, a Clinical Psychologist and Neuropsychologist, has been providing neuropsychological evaluations and psychotherapy to adults of all ages for the last twenty years. In 2001, Dr. Watson co-designed The Memory Club Program for the Alzheimer's Association California Southland Chapter. As part of the S+AGE™ team, Dr. Watson conducts neuropsychological evaluations and counseling to help individuals and families cope with memory loss, stress, and depression.



**Debbie Speciner, LCSW** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the Care Manager at S+AGE™. As a member of the S+AGE™ inter-disciplinary team, Ms. Speciner provides assistance during Care Transitions™ and works closely with individuals to improve quality of life and level of daily function as well as to reduce caregiver stress.



**Janice Hoffman, PharmD** is a consultant pharmacist at S+AGE™ and is an Assistant Professor at Western University of Health Science in pharmacy practice. Dr. Hoffman consults with patients, caregivers, and the S+AGE™ inter-disciplinary team in order to reduce side effects, polypharmacy issues, and improve medication compliance.

# S+AGE™ Newslines

S+AGE™  
at Sherman Oaks Hospital  
4911 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 100  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

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### S+AGE™

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### MAP

Addison St.

Huston St.

Van Nuys Blvd



## Upcoming Events

### *Free Memory Screenings by S+AGE™*

*Appointments available at three community sites:*

**S+AGE™ at Sherman Oaks Hospital (818) 341-SAGE (7243)**

**Circle of Care Leeza's Place (818) 817-3259**

**ONEgeneration (818) 705-2345**

### *Calendar Events*

**October 25-29** · Healthcare Decisions Week!

**November 7** · Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk · Century City Park · Call Alzheimer's Association for more information (323) 930-6228.

**Various Dates & Locations** · Caregiver Support Groups with Dr. Jennifer Watson · Call S+AGE™ for more information (818) 205-1917.

**Every Thursday** · Early Memory Loss Support Group at Circle of Care Leeza's Place · facilitated by Joy Fruth, MSW · Call Stefanie Elkins at (818) 817-3259 for more information.