

**For Immediate Release**

***Journal of the American Medical Association Shines Spotlight on Geroscience***

*Articles by five AFAR experts explore research field that offers ‘unprecedented opportunity for intervention’*

September 18, 2018 (New York, NY) – Geroscience—the burgeoning research field that focuses on the genetic, molecular, and cellular mechanisms that make aging a major risk factor for most chronic diseases as we age—takes center stage in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA), the world’s most widely circulated medical journal.

“The fact that JAMA, long one of the most highly influential and respected voices for the medical community, invited five AFAR experts to contribute articles on different aspects of geroscience vividly illustrates how this important and potentially transformative area of research continues to gain momentum,” AFAR Executive Director Stephanie Lederman said.

Highlighting how geroscience paves the way for therapeutic interventions and extending healthspan at large, the three articles co-authored by five AFAR experts are available online, and will appear in the October 2, 2018 print edition of JAMA. They are:

- **“[Aging as a Biological Target for Prevention and Therapy](#),”** by **Nir Barzilai**, MD, AFAR’s Deputy Scientific Director, **Ana Maria Cuervo**, MD, PhD, a former AFAR grantee, and **Steven Austad**, PhD, AFAR’s Scientific Director. The co-authors outline the substantial progress that has been made in targeting the underlying biological processes of aging in experimental animal models, and the potential to “prevent, or at a minimum delay, the onset and progression of multiple chronic diseases and debilities that are typically observed in older adults.” They wrote: “The discovery of cellular and molecular pathways that modulate healthy aging in diverse species across great evolutionary distances offers an unprecedented opportunity for intervention.”
- **“[Aging, Cell Senescence, and Chronic Disease: Emerging Therapeutic Strategies](#),”** by AFAR President-elect and 2012 AFAR grantee **James L. Kirkland**, MD, PhD, who heads Mayo Clinic’s Kogood Center on Aging. The article recounts the development of senolytic drugs, which target senescent cells that secrete inflammatory substances that exacerbate major chronic diseases. The first senolytics were identified by Kirkland’s team at Mayo in 2015, and are now entering clinical trials. “If senolytics are shown to be safe and effective in humans, they could transform care of older adults and patients with multiple chronic diseases that now can only be managed and have not been amenable to disease-modifying interventions. This speculation merits intensive and rapid investigation.”
- **“[From Lifespan to Healthspan](#),”** by AFAR board member **S. Jay Olshansky**, PhD. The article celebrates the 30-year increase in expected lifespan achieved in the past century, while arguing that “life extension should no longer be the primary goal of medicine when applied to people over age 65.” Instead, Olshansky wrote, “the principal outcome and most important metric of success should be the extension of healthspan”—the time we live independently in good health as we age.

JAMA’s recognition of geroscience builds on momentum led by AFAR experts in collaboration with major media and research partners.

- All five of the AFAR experts published in JAMA were among the 14 AFAR experts featured in the recent PBS documentary, **“[Incredible Aging: Adding Life to Your Years](#),”** which examined the latest research on healthy aging. The program was hosted by 14-time Emmy Award-winning host, executive producer, and anchor Meredith Vieira.
- This fall, on November 17, at the Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, AFAR is organizing a panel on “The TAME Trial: A Prototype for Geroscience-Guided Therapeutics.” The session will explore how the Targeting Aging with Metformin (TAME) Trial applies geroscience-based research concepts that can be translated into clinically relevant interventions.
- In fall 2019, the National Institute on Aging will host its third geroscience summit to expand awareness and engage the research community to fully embrace new funding opportunities unlocked by addressing multiple age-related diseases at once instead of focusing on individual chronic diseases. AFAR has been a sponsoring partner in the first two geroscience summits, which focused on disease drivers of aging, and how aging drives disease, in 2013 and 2016.

“By improving our understanding of the molecular mechanisms underlying the biological processes of aging, geroscience opens the door to exciting and innovative new pathways to address the major chronic diseases that affect older adults,” AFAR Medical Officer Richard W. Besdine, MD, said. “We will need a determined effort, involving not only the medical and biological research communities, but public and private partners as well, to make the translational discoveries needed to help people live healthier, longer as they age.”

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**About AFAR.** The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to support and advance healthy aging through biomedical research. Founded in 1981, AFAR has championed the cause and supported the funding of science in healthier aging and age-related medicine. To address the shortage of physicians and researchers dedicated to the science of healthier aging, AFAR funds physicians and scientists probing the fundamental mechanisms of aging, as well as specific diseases associated with aging populations at critical points throughout their careers. Learn more at [www.afar.org](http://www.afar.org) or follow AFARorg on Twitter and Facebook.

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