

## **Cutting-edge Researchers from Across the Nation Gathered in Lubbock for 2<sup>nd</sup> Healthy Aging & Dementia Research Symposium**

LUBBOCK – The Department of Internal Medicine at TTUHSC organized and hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Healthy Aging & Dementia Research Symposium on October 25-27, 2023. The three-day event brought together distinguished researchers and experts in the field from across the nation, while also providing the opportunity for tomorrow’s thought leaders in high school, college, and graduate school to share the symposium stage and the benefit of collaboration.

“The diversity of themes showcased the depth and breadth of research being conducted in the field, providing valuable insights and perspectives,” said Dr. Debomoy Lahiri, Distinguished Professor at Indiana University. “The inclusion of speakers from different parts of the country, representing institutions from Indiana, California, Kansas, and New Mexico, not only enriched the symposium but also presented a unique opportunity for close collaboration between these institutions and TTUHSC.”

Keynote Speaker Dr. Marcia Ory, Regents and Distinguished Professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at Texas A&M University agreed.

“What made this event stand out from other symposia was that it highlighted highly relevant neurobiology, clinical, and community research and practice concerns in Texas. It also framed these concerns within a national and international context,” Ory said. “The time for networking was also greatly appreciated. Our team has already initiated a new partnership with TTUHSC based on interactions at this symposium.”

Day One provided programming relevant to caregivers of dementia patients and explored perspectives on research being done to ease their burden. Day Two was heavily focused on scientific research that seeks a cure or vaccine for dementia, but also stresses the importance of preventing dementia through healthy aging practices. Day Three presentations addressed ways to find and secure funding for this critical research. National Institute of Health and National Institute of Aging were represented, along with organizations that are more often thought of as fundraisers rather than funding providers. These included Alzheimer’s Association and American Heart Association.

With over 20 speakers, 10 oral presentations, and 43 research poster presentations over the course of the three days, there was something for everyone. Likewise, symposium attendees included a cross-section of scientists, students, community members and caregivers.

“This was a first-class, state-of-the-art symposium for those interested in Alzheimer’s Disease and brain aging,” said Dr. Russell Swerdlow, Professor and Director of the Alzheimer’s Disease Center at University of Kansas Medical Center. “Dr. Reddy and his team have simply done an incredible job in developing a research event that is really second to none. I was honored to be a part of it and will look forward to the next one.”

Internal Medicine is already in discussion about making this symposium a biennial event, considering hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Healthy Aging and Dementia Research Symposium in the fall of 2025.

Reddy said ‘It was a good feeling to witness the presenters from High School, Undergrade interns, medical and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers and faculty members alongside, healthcare professionals, geriatricians and community/social workers’ active participation at the symposium”. Intense interactions between symposium participants and officials from funding agencies such as NIH, Alzheimer’s Association and American Heart Association would be beneficial. Symposium organizers did commendable job in putting the symposium together in a short period of time Reddy, Professor and Vice Chair of Basic and Translational Research, Internal Medicine, TTUHSC said.

“The depth of knowledge and expertise showcased by the speakers was remarkable,” said Dr. Keshav Singh, Professor, University of Alabama, Birmingham. “Each presentation was engaging, informative, and thought-provoking, providing me with a wealth of knowledge that I will carry with me in my personal and professional life. The symposium was a wonderful meeting of the minds, and I am already looking forward to the next one.”

“Second Healthy Aging and Dementia Research Symposium was held in Lubbock, TX discussing current status of research on Healthy Aging and Dementia. There were great presentations by Basic Scientists, Social Scientists, Clinicians and more that were well attended by High-school students, pre- and post-doctoral fellows, early-stage investigators and established investigators. Kudos to TTUHSC leadership and members for planning and hosting this great symposium! Dr Sanoj Suneja, Dy Director, Extramural Activities, NIA” said.

Even the host city of Lubbock received positive feedback from participants. Dr. Lahiri said, “I was particularly impressed by the vibrant and modern atmosphere of the Health Sciences Center and Texas Tech. The city is rich in modern amenities and the warmth and friendliness of the people made the experience truly unforgettable.”

For more information on the healthy aging and dementia research being done at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, contact Malcolm Brownell, Ph.D. at [malcolm.brownell@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:malcolm.brownell@ttuhsc.edu) .