



**Reversibility and Mutability Research:  
Approaches to Reducing Health Disparities**

An NIA Workshop on Innovative Issues in Minority Aging Research

In Conjunction with the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) Meeting  
Co-Sponsored by: The Gerontological Society of America's Social Research,  
Policy, Practice Section (SRPP), GSA Task Force on Minority Issues in Gerontology, and  
NIH National Institute on Aging Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR)

**July 23, 2017  
8:30 am – 4:30 pm**

Moscone West convention center  
747 Howard Street (Room 2000)  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**Overview**

The improvement in unfavorable health trajectories in mid-life and beyond is the motive for reversibility research and the reason it has already attracted the strong interest of NIA and other funding agencies. The range of long-term outcomes of early adversity is broad. Of most interest to minority aging researchers may be general medical health and well being, emotional and behavioral self-regulation, optimism, economic planning and security, cognitive reserve, satisfying and productive social engagement and the capacity to care for an ill or demented spouse. Impairments in most of these domains have already been linked to severe early adversity. Evidence is emerging that the underlying risk mechanisms might be reversible, suggesting the possibility for successful interventions

This RCMAR pre-conference will focus on key conceptual, design, measurement, and analytic issues in reversibility and mutability research building on the work of the Network on Reversibility, sponsored by the NIA and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the United Kingdom. Presentations and interactive exercises will apply this body of work to minority aging and health disparities research including poor health outcomes of diverse older adults, distinct health behavioral pathways that mediate early life disadvantage and later life health outcomes in diverse groups, as well as the design of targeted interventions that are sensitive to population subgroups' particular needs and social contexts. The session will also include discussions of the potential for midlife plasticity of biobehavioral or psychological systems affected by early life disadvantage, and review the use of existing datasets with appropriate variables and analytical approaches to focus reversibility research on the special issues of racial and ethnic minority populations.

**Conference Goals**

- Introduce minority aging researchers to the complex issues and potential benefits of reversibility research

- Share the work of the Network on Reversibility with the minority aging research community
- Stimulate new research in reversibility and sustainability to address health disparities and poor health outcomes in minority populations

### **Learning Objectives**

*At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will:*

- ◆ Increase their knowledge of key issues in reversibility research
- ◆ Outline useful conceptual frameworks and measurement tools for reversibility research
- ◆ Identify available data sets useful in reversibility research with ethnic and racially diverse older populations
- ◆ Engage in discussions on new collaborative reversibility research topics and projects key to improving the health of older diverse populations

### **Agenda**

- 8:30 AM      **Welcoming Remarks and Overview of Conference Objectives**  
*Janet C. Frank, DrPH\**  
Director Emeritas, RCMAR Coordinating Center  
*Lisbeth Nielsen, PhD*
- 8:40            **The State of the Art in Mutability and Reversibility Research**  
*Frances Champagne, PhD*  
Associate Professor Behavioral Neuroscience, Columbia University  
Member, Network on Reversibility
- 9:30            Morning Break
- 9:45            **Adverse Childhood Experiences, Ageing, and Age-related Disease in Humans: Insights from Birth-cohort Studies**  
*Andrea Danese, MD, PhD*  
Senior Lecturer in Developmental Psychobiology and Psychiatry  
MRC Social, Genetic, and Developmental Psychiatry (SGDP) Centre,  
and Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience  
King's College London  
Member, Network on Reversibility
- 10:45          **Facilitated Discussion: Key Mutability and Reversibility Issues in Minority Aging**  
Facilitator: *Nina Harawa, PhD\**  
Co-director, RCMAR Coordinating Center

## 2017 Conference Agenda

(continued)

- 11:15      **Measurement in Reversibility Research: Recovery, Resilience and Rumination**  
*Elissa Epel, PhD*  
*Professor, Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco*  
*Member, Network on Reversibility*
- Discussant:**  
*Jeanne Teresi, PhD\**  
*Professor, Columbia University*
- 12:15 pm      Networking Lunch (no host)
- 1:15 PM      **The Use of National Datasets for Reversibility Research**  
*Teresa Seeman, PhD\* and Sharon Merkin, PhD, MHS*  
*\*Professor, Medicine & Public Health, University of California, Los Angeles*  
*Member, Network on Reversibility*  
*Associate Researcher, Division of Geriatrics, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA*
- 2:00      Afternoon Break – Move to Roundtable Discussion session
- 2:15      **Identifying Potential Reversibility Research Projects: Round Table Discussions**  
**Breakouts of 6-8 persons per table, moderated by one of the speakers from the day and RCMAR Directors/Core Leaders**  
*(Frank, Seeman, Merkin, Epel and Harawa)*
- Group exercise: Each participant will identify one research idea or one area of research they will seek further information about**
- 3:00      **Reporting out from Discussion Groups**  
**Facilitators:** *Nina Harawa, PhD\* and Lisbeth Nielsen*
- 3:30      **Closing Plenary: Interventional Research on Biological Mechanism Connections to Early Life Adversity and Influences on Health**  
*Eric Loucks, PhD*  
*Assistant Professor of Epidemiology*  
*Brown University; Member, Network on Reversibility*
- 4:15      **Closing Comments | Evaluations | Adjourn**  
*Janet C. Frank, DrPH*

\* RCMAR faculty, scholar, or from RCMAR institution