

Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 23

March 2024

Comments from Linda

We are at the mid-point of the spring semester and things continue to move along quite well. We have a nice cohort of students this semester and I am enjoying seeing them getting more & more involved. We also have lots of new faces on our client roster, some from UC Davis and some from Sac State faculty retirement recruitment. Welcome everyone!

A major boon for us this semester is Sharon Myers joining our staff and helping out on Tuesdays. I will share I have been hoping for all ten years that we have been going that she would get involved, and I am so grateful that she is now finally able to do so. She brings a wealth of knowledge and communication skills and we are so blessed to have her with us.

Debbie's schedule continues with us twice monthly, and she has now evolved to do cooking demonstrations her 2nd session each month. She's always open to suggestion so give her some ideas please. Luckily John is a big part of these demonstrations and I have included his bread recipe in this newsletter.

Linda Larsen also continues with us, although she's busy busy busy so sadly we're only seeing her once/month now. But that one visit is a major blessing. Thank you!

And I am always hopeful that I can get our two physicians, Dr. Bukkapatnam & Dr. Lopez over to share insights with us whenever they can.

Linda

CWP Newsletter

This newsletter is created quarterly with a primary intent of reaching those we have not seen lately. If you would like to receive a hard copy in the mail, please let me know. Call and leave a message (916-278-4402) or send an email:

csuscwvwellness@gmail.com

Prior issues are archived on our webpage

<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/newsletter>

Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer, MA

Dean's Notes, Dianne Hyson, PhD

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Recipe Corner

Universe in Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN



Dean's Notes

A few weeks ago, I met with our enthusiastic new campus President, Dr. Luke Wood, and took the opportunity to brag about the Cardiovascular Wellness Program. Our conversation began with me sharing the glossy "case statement" brochure that summarizes the program (check it out if you have not already), but there is so much more to tell! I was very proud to let President Wood know about our founder, Dr. Kappagoda, and his unwavering commitment to principles such as dignity and connection for every individual. "Dr. K" passionately advocated for open access to heart health resources, dedicating his career to dismantling barriers that many encounter as they seek to take care of their health.



Dianne Hyson, PhD, Dean
College of Social Sciences
and Interdisciplinary Studies

When Dr. K first proposed the idea of promoting and providing cardiovascular wellness in a community-based program on a teaching campus without a medical school, some people were skeptical. However, not us—in true Sacramento State style, with our value on connecting with and supporting the community and people in it, we found the "we can DO this" spirit. With the help of others and different units and people on the campus, we were granted free space to initiate the program back in 2013, followed by donated computers, access to campus services, faculty interest, and students eager for experiential learning. Over a decade later, the program has been undeniably successful in changing lives, fostering community, improving health outcomes, supporting research, and training students to collaborate across disciplines.

In addition to the engagement of you as program participants, the success is largely attributed to the spirit and dedicated, mostly pro bono, hours and "heart" invested by many, including our fearless leader, Linda Paumer. Several of the current experts actively involved in the program were part of Dr. Kappagoda's original team, and we remain aligned with his way of thinking and values. You will hear more about our ongoing efforts to uphold his legacy and continue to shape the program's future. The valuable input of all who believe in our campus-based accessible approach, including esteemed cardiologists such as Doctors Bukkapatnam and Lopez, along with the support of campus leadership and your backing, is crucial to establishing permanence for the program as we progress. I am committed to doing my part to elevate and amplify the success of the Cardiovascular Wellness Program and emphasize this unique and special opportunity to collaborate and share in a meaningful and significant way. BTW, Dr. Wood was intrigued and I am hoping to bring him by to visit.

March Is Women's History Month

Dear friends, I would like to recognize the women who had a role in shaping how we take care of patients with heart disease. As a mother, wife and a woman in a very aggressive and stressful field that was largely controlled by men, I find I have to work 10 times harder to be taken seriously as a doctor and especially a Cardiologist. Yet, when I look at all the women that took to this field decades ago, I cannot imagine the sacrifices they made or the humiliation they had to endure, when a lot of Medical Schools, operating rooms and hospitals did not allow women into patient care, and if they did, were treated as second class citizens.

In 1936, Dr Maude Abbott creates a system for classifying congenital heart disease

In 1943, Dr Myra Adele Logan becomes the first woman to operate on a human heart

1944, Dr Helen Taussig, who was denied a diploma from Harvard operates on a child that is born blue and invents a procedure that is still used today. She was deaf and dyslexic, and yet became the first female president of the American Heart Association in 1965

In 1985, Dr Margaret Allen became the first female surgeon in the US to transplant a heart

In 2022, Dr Christine Seidman received the 2022 Research achievement Award for discoveries in the genetics of Cardiomyopathy.

Of course, all the women that worked as nurses, therapists, caregivers that supported the doctors while they took care of sick patients go unrecognized. To all the doyens, and the women that support our patients, a shout out, and a request to take care of your health, while caring for others. And a big thank you, for all your hardwork.



Radhika Nandur Bukkapatnam, MD
Medical Director, CWP

Most times, I struggle to choose what to contribute to the newsletter; but, not this time. When I saw the article I'm sharing, I knew right away that we should be discussing this more. Our cardiovascular health is not just about our genes, our lifestyles and the care we (or not) receive (all of these are very important contributors), but it is also about the environment in which we live.



PreventionForward

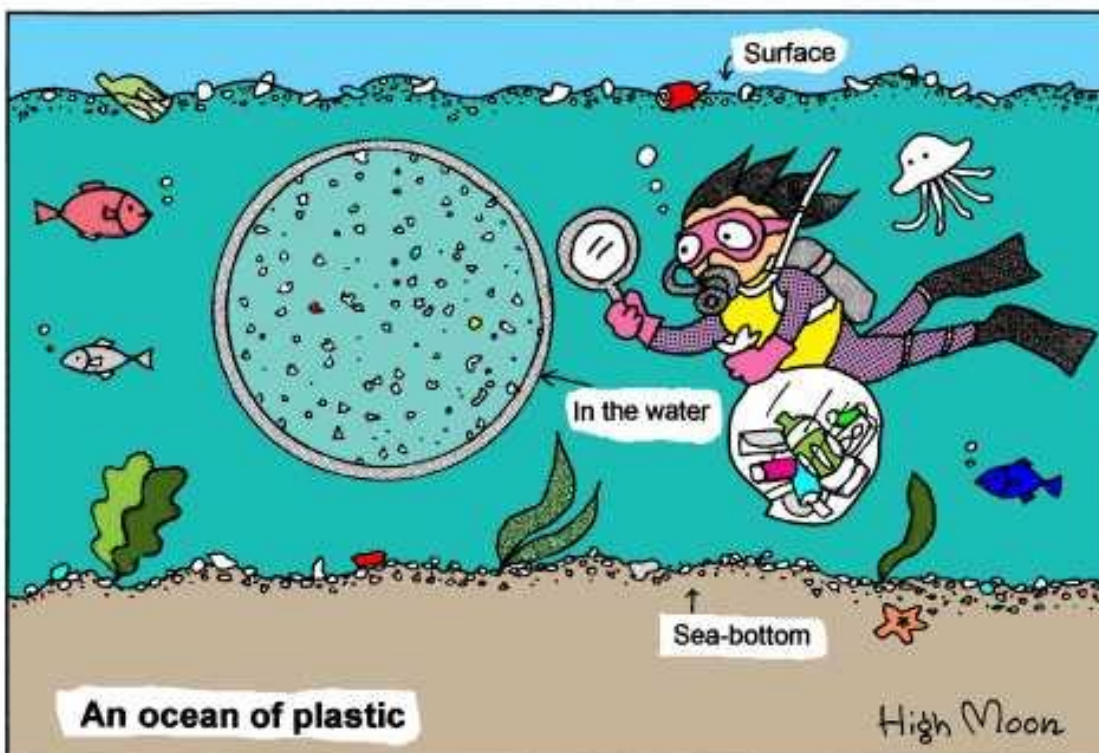
Javier López, MD
Medical Director, UC Davis
Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

In this [“just published” article](#), a new “who done it” character for cardiovascular risk comes to play -- plastic! Yes, the plastic in our environment may, in fact, be the most recently-discovered risk factor in our society. While the findings of this article will need to be reproduced under stringent conditions to be conclusive, I think we all need to start the conversation on how plastic affects our health. If the findings are confirmed, we will need to think seriously about how to protect not just animals and plants from plastic pollution, but us as well. This is now personal!

As reported by [NBC News](#) on March 6, 2024, *scientists found tiny nanoplastics in people's arteries. Their presence was tied to a higher risk of heart disease. The new research is the first to associate such plastics inside the body with heart attack, stroke or death. They knew of the enormous amount of degraded plastic pollution contaminating the planet and wondered “whether plastic, in the form of micro- or nanoplastics, could also degrade our arteries,” Marfella said in an email. People can inhale and ingest the plastic particles. The plastic can also enter the body through skin.*

I look forward to reviewing this study with you later in the month and together I'd like to start a conversation on how we can begin a focus on keeping the health of our environment knowing that it is truly part of our individual health.

Javier



Note: Minute pieces of plastic become a big problem as marine pollution.

CWP Projects

The continued interaction of our older adult clients with the younger generation, the Sac State students, is an integral part of our program. Your involvement with the students is always requested (in whatever fashion suits you) and is greatly appreciated.

Current projects (Spring 2024):

- 1) Noah, one of our gero interns, has created a fun set of activities for us involving music therapy, through karaoke. He has led one session so far and hopes to do a few more. He is accommodating the various requests folks are coming up with and it is pretty fun watching you all. No, you don't sing particularly well, but, so what?
- 2) Billal, another gero intern, is helping us with oral care. Wendy, our third gero intern, is doing an outreach project, determining the barriers that are keeping our many UCD referrals from getting started with the program. We are currently asking everyone for a health status update, and Leanne, a gero major, is coordinating that form collection. Thank you!
- 3) Javier is a PT student very graciously coming in on Friday afternoons to lead balance activity sessions. He hopes to recruit some classmates and it is wonderful that this session is growing in popularity. More PT interaction will be coming our way soon.
- 4) We will continue to have student involvement with research students (ID201) as well as community nutrition and psychology students. A psych survey is brewing that you should see on Qualtrics very soon.
- 5) We have a cohort of nursing students who started as interns and continue to stay involved even though they are ingrained in their nursing studies. It is nice they feel at home with us and when they drop in and help out, that's always a plus.



At our next Karaoke session, Rob promised to give us his best Bob Dylan imitation! Dave does a pretty good rendition too.

Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*



What Is Circuit Training?

Circuit training is a type of workout that involves rotating through a circuit of various exercises that target different muscle groups. Circuit training refers to how a workout routine is structured rather than a specific type of exercise.

With circuit training, you complete each set of exercises for a certain number of repetitions (typically 10-20), or amount of time (typical 30-60 seconds). Then, you move to another activity with little or no rest in between. Because you move through the circuit of exercises relatively quickly, an entire circuit training session can usually be completed in only 30–45 minutes.

Circuit training is a flexible and highly individualized form of exercise that you can adjust in various ways depending on your personal preferences for exercise types, intensity, and duration. You can create your own circuit routine and complete it at home, or can join the circuit sessions that I lead four days/week, at 1:15 pm. You can join either from home via Zoom, or join us in Folsom Hall. These sessions are growing in popularity and it is great to have a group of people in the gym doing these activities together. I certainly am having a lot of fun.

Benefits of Circuit Training

An efficient circuit training workout incorporates exercises that target muscles of the upper and lower body, which helps to increase overall strength. With little to no rest between exercises, circuit training serves as a good form of cardiovascular exercise, evidenced by increasing your heart rate a bit and causing you to breathe a little harder. Heart health is enhanced as your heart has to pump harder to keep those muscles supplied with oxygen-rich blood.

Things we do in our circuit routines

Shoulder series: scaption, shrugs, rotation, front raise, side raise

Arm series: biceps curls, triceps extension, bentover or vertical rowing

Lower body series: sit-to-stand, backlifts

Chest series: chest press, flys, straight-arm back reaches

Core series: plank, crunches, superman, hip bridges, back-lying leg lifts (dying bug)

Cardio bouts: stepping, cycling, rowing, walking, farmer's walk



Building social health with foods

By Debbie Lucus

Whenever you hear about healthy living these days, there is always a social component that contributes to reduction of chronic disease and an increase in life expectancy. There is a lot of science and research to back that up.

Blue Zones Power 9 by Dan Buettner includes having the ‘right tribe’ – a small social network who are committed for life

NEURO 9 by Drs. Dean and Ayesha Sherzai: The ‘O’ in NEURO stands for Optimize which includes making social connections to boost brain health

Lifestyle Medicine pillars: Of the 6 pillars of lifestyle medicine (a certification your practitioners can earn through the American College of Lifestyle Medicine), one is for positive social connections

Cardiovascular Wellness Program: Yes, we are just as hip as these famous doctors and programs! One of our pillars is Social Interaction – something that I think we and you excel at.

Since I am all about the food, what are some ways we can incorporate cooking, food and meals into the social interaction pillar?

Cooking demonstrations

Linda has gathered together a talented group of students who are whipping up some amazing food on a weekly basis. That means that if you are at the gym- ‘**socializing**’- you also get to learn about and taste heart healthy foods.

Once a month John and I put on a cooking demo. The bigger the crowd, the more fun it is, the more questions asked that we can learn from and you always get some yummy food. I will admit my muffins this month were nothing to write home about, but John’s brownie truffles were amazing – you win some, you lose some. The point is, you come in, **get social** and learn cooking tips to stay healthy with like-minded peers. We are always looking for ideas about what to demo, so please let us know what you would like to see!

CWP Monthly Potlucks

Nothing says **social** like a potluck. Unlike traditional potlucks, where everyone brings their artery-clogging signature dishes, ours are all whole food, plant-based with a focus on heart health. This is a great opportunity to try your hand at making plant-based dishes and to taste everyone else’s. If you aren’t sure what to bring, we have many, many recipes that we have utilized for demonstrations, as well as cookbooks to look through for ideas in our library and our own CWP cookbook – which I still use all the time and was created from years of potlucks when we were the Heart Disease Reversal Program at UCDMC. Still not sure what to bring? Then just try something easy, like fruit. Of course, it isn’t mandatory to bring a dish, so feel free to still come if you aren’t bringing a dish and just....**socialize** while you eat! You can also have potlucks with your family, friends, neighbors, etc.



Cooking Clubs

This is one of my favorite ways to **socialize** with food. My own cooking club has been together for over 10 years. We are a group of 6 women and when we first started, we didn't all know each other. Two of us just each invited 2 friends and never imagined we would last this long. A few have left and new ones have joined and we have a great time once a month. Some cooking club tips:

1. Pick a regular meeting time so that everyone can have it on their calendar (i.e. the 3rd Wednesday of the month)
2. Make a name (ours is La Dulce Divas)
3. Choose location(s) (we alternate houses)
4. Decide how you want to have the cooking work
 - Pick a recipe and everyone bring ingredients?
 - Everyone bring a dish to prepare along with those ingredients?
 - Have a theme every month? (i.e. tapas, Italian, soups, salads, etc.)
 - When we are together, we share in the cooking, preparation and clean up and all sit down to eat together.
5. Discuss food restrictions (while my group isn't vegan, they are very gracious and almost always choose plant-based foods). We have several allergies in our group from gluten to avocado, so we modify for that.
6. How will you stay in touch? It is probably best to have a lead person to send out emails or texts. I generally send an email out to our group after we meet to start discussing ideas for the next month if we didn't choose while we were cooking/eating.
7. Have some variety – every once in a while, we will go out to eat instead of cooking, or have a field trip – such as to KP International Market. If we can't settle on a dish to make, we will do a Chopped! Edition of cooking club. If you have not watched the Chopped! Television show, the cooks on the show open a basket and have to make meals out of whatever is in the basket – and sometimes there are some weird items. For our club, everyone brings 2 different foods and we just figure out what to make!
8. Just have fun!!

Eating Out

Trying new restaurants with family and friends is a fun way to **socialize**. There are always new restaurants to try at all budget levels and of course, many tried and true favorites. I've learned that if a new plant-based restaurant opens, I better get there, since they sadly don't always last. Not all restaurants are heart healthy, so you have to use your detective skills to order things that will be consistent with your eating plan. I use the free Yelp app to find plant-based-friendly restaurants as well as Happy Cow (which is an app you have to pay for). I always check the menu out online before I go so that I will have an idea of what I can order as well as what modifications I may ask for.

We eat food to nourish our bodies, bring us joy and to stay healthy. Why not combine that with some social activities? I hope you can utilize these fun ways to socialize with food!

Jenny's No Knead Bread

From John Skarstad, Adapted from: Jenny Jones,
<https://www.jennycancook.com/recipes/faster-no-knead-bread/>

Recipe
Corner

Ingredients:

3 cups (360-390 g //12 ¾ ounces) all-purpose or bread flour
¼ teaspoon yeast, active dry or instant (1 g)
1 teaspoon salt (6 g)
1 ½ cups (354 mL) hot water, not boiling - hot tap water - about 125-130° F
(about 2 Tablespoons extra flour for shaping)

Directions:

Combine flour, yeast and salt in a large bowl. Stir in water until it's well combined. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature for 3 hours.

After 3 hours dough will become puffy and dotted with bubbles. Transfer it to a well-floured surface and sprinkle dough with a little flour. Using a scraper, fold dough over 10-12 times & shape into a rough ball.

Place in a parchment paper-lined bowl (not wax paper) and cover with a towel. Let stand on counter top for about 35 minutes.

Meantime place Dutch oven with lid in a cold oven and preheat to 450° F. My oven takes 35 minutes to reach 450°. (My Dutch oven is 5 ½ quart)

When oven reaches 450° carefully, using oven gloves, lift the parchment paper and dough from the bowl and place gently into the hot pot. (parchment paper goes in the pot too)

Cover and bake for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, remove lid and parchment paper. Return, uncovered, to oven and bake 10 - 15 more minutes. Let it cool at least 15 minutes before slicing.

Notes:

For whole wheat raisin nut bread, I used the same technique with these ingredients:

250 g whole wheat flour 150 g bread flour

1 cup raisins (or other dried fruit)

1 cup walnuts (or pecans)

2 teaspoons cinnamon (or other spice)

1 tsp salt

¼ teaspoon yeast

1 1/2 cups (354 mL) hot water

I have tried:

Dried figs & anise

Dried cherries, orange zest, & cinnamon

Dried blueberries & cardamom



Mindfulness and Community in the Garden

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT



Many of you know that I am a rosarian, in other words I grow roses – a lot of roses. So, I am frequently out in my front yard tending to them. While in my yard, I have observed that my mindfulness practice of paying attention to my present moment experience (described by UCLA’s Diana Winston as “Paying attention to our present moment experiences with openness and curiosity and a willingness to be with what is”) has really benefited my roses. My increased focus when I am feeding, pruning, weeding, or mulching allows me to be more in tune with what each rose bush, branch or companion plant requires.

Like many gardeners, I’ve observed that when plants are all around me, the sky is above, and my hands are in the soil, I feel connected to the present moment. I don’t even have to be occupied to appreciate “being in the moment” simply sitting on my front bench, allowing an awareness of feeling centered, calm, open and present to what is going on externally *and* internally in my body, mind and spirit.

To my surprise, my solo hobby of gardening has increased the size of my community. My husband now not only engineers my watering system and digs holes for new roses, but also attends the Sacramento Rose Society meetings with me; we both have many new rosarian friends. When I am out front, many people walking by stop to ask questions, chat about various aspects of my roses or tell me about their gardens or life. My mindfulness practice of being in the moment enables me to stop whatever task I am doing at that time and shift my attention fully to the person and our conversation. I’ve observed that as important as my gardening duties are, I personally gain from these social exchanges a stronger sense of belonging, support, and wellbeing.

Mindfulness in the garden can be as easy as taking a moment to center yourself and taking in all the smells, sounds and sights around you before picking up tools and getting started. Or simply appreciate how the soil or plant feels, the array of colors, textures, and patterns, and notice what do you hear or taste? (Looking forward to cherry tomatoes!) As someone passes by – make eye contact, smile, notice if they are moving away or towards you, notice your own emotions and bodily sensations as you encounter them. If you don’t feel comfortable talking with them, give a clear boundary message with your body, turn your back, close your eyes, or move away. If non-verbal cues aren’t working, say a simple “got to get back to this. . .” You could even meditate for your garden or the passers-by. A simple and highly effective meditation is repeating internally, “may you be happy & free from suffering, safe & protected from danger and illness (including free from roses with aphids!), May you be peaceful and calm, with hearts full of love & peace.”

The attached Mayo Clinic article declares “Social connections are important because they help lower stress, improve resilience, and provide support during difficult times in life. A strong sense of belonging lowers your risk of depression, anxiety and suicide.” I encourage all of us, whether we are gardening in our front yard, sitting at a coffee shop on our cellphone or laptop, standing in line at a store, or even with family or friends, choose to be open to mindful participation with others, smile, and cultivate an attitude of kindness and curiosity. Meaningful and regular social exchanges support the health, safety, and resilience of our communities and your own overall well-being.

"Out of gardens grow fleeting flowers but lasting friendships."

- Beverly Rose Hopper

For more in depth on mindfulness, community, and gardening:

<https://mcpress.mayoclinic.org/living-well/dig-into-the-benefits-of-gardening/>

www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/affect-health.htm

www.canr.msu.edu/news/mindfulness-in-the-garden

www.mindful.org/gardening-a-growing-trend-in-mindfulness/

<https://extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/07/gardening-as-a-mindfulness-practice/>

www.ukri.org/what-we-do/iyp2020/how-plants-promote-better-mental-health-and-wellbeing/