Comorbid diseases or multiple morbidity confront most clinicians in their everyday practice with older patients, while conceptual and empirical work on these problems has lagged. "Comorbidity" has been defined "any distinct additional clinical entity that has existed or that may occur during the clinical course of a patient who has the index disease under study" (Feinstein, 1970). Alternatively, multiple morbidity may be conceived of as the number of chronic conditions, their severity, and their effects on physiological capacity. There are important conceptual linkages between multiple morbidity and other processes important in elderly populations, such as disablement and frailty. Still, much research excludes older subjects with significant comorbidity or multiple diseases. As a result, very basic questions currently do not have clear answers. How can we better define and measure comorbidity and multiple morbidity? How are they related to aging? These and related questions will be addressed by a select group of expert clinicians and scientists.
Wednesday, March 2, 2005
Augusta Rooms I & II Seventh Floor

American Geriatrics Society Staff

Jill Epstein, Vice President, Operations, Governance and Communications, New York, NY
Julie Pestana, Manager, Operations, Governance and Communications, New York, NY

The conference will begin with an evening dinner and after-dinner speakers.

Welcoming remarks: Darryl Wieland, PhD, MPH
A brief perspective on the conference topic, and introduction of Dr. Fried

(After-dinner presentation)
Comorbidity, Frailty, and Disability
Speaker: Linda Fried, MD
Goal and content: Develop how multiple morbidity is related to the development of frailty and subsequent disability in older patients, and how better understanding of the linkages may result in improvements in geriatric care.

Thursday, March 3, 2005
Room: International D Sixth Floor
MORNING SESSION - Researching Co-morbid Disease and Multiple Morbidity in an Aging Society: Reports from the NIA Comorbidity Taskforce.
(20-minute talks based on the TF commissioned reports)

(8:00-8:15am)
Overview of the Taskforce: Introduction of the Session
Speaker: David Reuben, MD
Goal and content: Provide a brief overview of the work of the NIA Comorbidity Taskforce as context for the session's presentations that are based upon papers commissioned by NIA from the presenters.

(8:15-8:35am)
Classifying Severity of Chronic Disease: The necessity and the challenges.
Speaker: Cynthia Boyd, MD
Goal and content: The goal is to discuss how severity of individual diseases is classified, and the implications for research and clinical practice with older adults with comorbidity.

(8:35-8:55am)
The Nosology of Multiple Diseases, Impairments, Conditions.
Speaker: Arun Karlamangla, MD, PhD
Goal and content: Older adults generally have multiple medical problems as well as sub-clinical changes in several physiologic systems. This paper presents a framework for considering comorbid processes and diseases that will facilitate research and help clinicians caring for older adults.

(8:55-9:15am)
Comorbidity Measurement, Measurement Error, and Analytic Strategies
Speakers: Rebecca A. Silliman, MD, PhD and Timothy L. Lash, DSc, MPH
Goal and content: To identify the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches to comorbidity measurement, including data sources, and to describe analytic strategies for dealing with measurement error.

(9:15-9:35am)
Data Sources Relevant to Comorbidity and Aging Research
Speaker: Martine Extermann, MD
Goal and content: Provide researchers with an overview of the type of data sources available, with their strengths and drawbacks

(9:35-10:30am) Audience Questions and Discussion

~Break~

Thursday, March 3, 2005 Cont'd
Room: International D

LATE MORNING SESSION - Researching Co-morbid Disease and Multiple Morbidity in an Aging Society: Results from the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam.

(10:50-11:30am) Influence of comorbidity on changes in functioning among community-dwelling elderly people
Speaker: DiDi Kriegsman, MD, PhD
Goal and content: The presentation will provide a summary of the longitudinal analyses on the influence of comorbidity on physical, cognitive and emotional functioning among participants in the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam.

(11:30-12:00pm) Audience Questions and Discussion

(12:00-1:30pm) Lunch
Room: Vinings II Sixth Floor
AFTERNOON SESSION - Comorbid Conditions in Relation to Specific Index Conditions in Aging Clinical Populations: What do we know? What is missing?

(1:35-1:45pm)  
Overview of and Introduction to Session: Stephanie Studenski, MD

(1:45-2:15pm)  
Overview of the Veterans Aging Cohort Study-Aging with HIV  
Speaker: Amy Justice, MD, PhD
Goal and Content: The talk will provide a summary of the work of VACS group to date. Dr. Justice will present original data on differences in co-occurrence of medical conditions/impairments/disease between aging HIV-positive and HIV-negative populations.

(2:15-2:45pm)  
Complexities of the Co-occurrence of Late-Life Depression and Medical Conditions in Elderly Patients  
Speaker: Ira Katz, MD, PhD
Goal and Content: To review the evidence base demonstrating the increases in morbidity, disability, and mortality that arise from the interactions between depression and the other medical conditions that are common in late life; and to present examples of both physiological and behavioral mechanisms that could account for these effects.

(2:45-3:15pm)  
Risks of Alcohol Use and Comorbidity  
Speaker: Alison Moore, MD, MPH
Goal and Content: To better understand the risks and benefits of alcohol use on health-related outcomes when one considers comorbidity. Dr. Moore will review the risks and benefits of alcohol use and describe an assessment of these risks that includes consideration of both specific amounts of alcohol use and specific comorbidity. She will present data demonstrating mortality risks of alcohol use when combined with specific comorbidity and contrast this with data on mortality risks of alcohol without consideration of comorbidity.

~Break~

(3:30-4:00pm)  
The Clinical Epidemiology of Comorbidity in Aging Patients: Findings and Insights from Geriatric Oncology  
Speaker: William A. Satariano, PhD, MPH
Goal and Content: To provide an overview of research methods and findings on the effects of comorbidity on clinical and public health outcomes among older cancer patients. Special attention will be given to the contributions of research in this area for the general study of the causes and consequences of comorbidity among older patients.

(4:00-4:30pm)  
Cardiovascular Disease and Comorbidity in Aging Patients.  
Speaker: Anne Newman, MD
Goal and Content: To provide an overview of research on the relationship of cardiovascular disease to the aging process, with a focus on the relationship of subclinical disease (assessed by non-invasive testing) to decline in physical and cognitive function and frailty.

(4:30-5:00pm)  
Diabetes and Comorbid Conditions in Aging Patients  
Speaker: Caroline Blaum, MD
Goal and Content: The metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes lead to many comorbidities, but research suggests that diabetes-related mobility disability is independent of its major comorbidities. The goal of this presentation is to explore how comorbidities influence the association of the metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes with frailty and
selected disability outcomes. Such research can begin to evaluate the hypothesis that frailty is a consequence of
comorbidity.

(5:00-6:00pm) Discussion

Friday, March 4, 2005 Room: International D Sixth Floor

MORNING SESSION - The Social Burden of Multiple Morbidity: Broader Views.

(8:30-8:45am) Introduction to Session: G. Darryl Wieland, PhD, MPH

(8:45-9:15am) Multiple Morbidity and Service Utilization in the VA System
Speaker: Dan Berlowitz, MD, MPH
Goal and content: To describe existing case-mix measures, such as ACGs and DCGs, that rely on administrative
data; to demonstrate how these case-mix systems have been utilized to predict clinical and resource outcomes; and
to describe how these measures perform in describing service utilization in the VA.

(9:15-9:45am) Multiple Morbidity and the Medicare Program: Prevalence, Costs, and Opportunities for Improvement
Speaker: Jennifer Wolff, PhD
Goal and content: To broadly describe Medicare's chronic care imperative, to outline policy issues surrounding high
quality medical care for individuals with chronic disease and to touch on key chronic care improvement initiatives.

(9:45-10:00am) Questions/General Discussion

~Break~

Friday, March 4, 2005 Cont'd Room: International D

LATE MORNING SESSION - Toward a Research Agenda on Comorbid Disease and Multiple Morbidity in an Aging
Society: Posing and Answering Key Questions.

(10:15-12:15 pm) Smaller Mixed Group Breakouts (facilitated and notes taken by a recorder) - 1 hour
Goal and content: The goal will be to generate and refine in each breakout group a number of key questions and
issues apropos a co-/multiple morbidity research agenda. The groups will be comprised of a mix of conference
speakers and participants, with a balance of NIH/Comorbidity & TF members vs. participants from the field;
researchers vs. clinicians; and geriatricians vs. other specialists.

(11:30-12:30pm) Lunch Room: Vinings II Sixth Floor

Recorders from the small groups will report on their discussions during the course of the lunch.

~CONFERENCE FORMALLY ENDS AT 12:30pm~

1The following are members of the NIA Comorbidity Taskforce-Harvey Cohen, Bill Ershler, Martine Extermann, Luigi
Ferrucci, Linda Fried, Jack Guralnik, Jerry Gurwitz, Evan Hadley, Jeff Halter, Taylor Harden (NIA staff), Bill Hazzard,