



Cognitive Training for Older Adults: Does it Work?



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Wednesday, June 3, 2015 | American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C.

Schedule

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

- **Welcome**

Michael Kirsch

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, AIR

- **Introduction**

Marilyn Moon

Director, Center on Aging at AIR

- **Presentations**

George Rebok

Senior Advisor, Center on Aging at AIR

Michelle Carlson

Associate Professor, Center on Aging and Health, Johns Hopkins University

Tony Gentry

Associate Professor, Occupational Therapy, Virginia Commonwealth University

Robin Lea West

Professor, Everyday Memory and Aging, University of Florida

- **Discussion**

- **Q&A**

BIOGRAPHIES

Marilyn Moon

Director, Center on Aging at AIR



Marilyn Moon is an Institute Fellow and director of AIR's Center on Aging. Her current work focuses on the role of informing consumers, providers and policymakers about aging and health care issues, issues in delivery system innovations, and approaches to Medicare and Social Security reform.

Social Security reform.

A nationally known economist and expert on Medicare, aging, consumer health issues and health care financing, Dr. Moon has also served as a senior fellow at the Urban Institute and as a public trustee for the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. She has written extensively on health policy, reform issues in Medicare health financing and other social insurance issues. In the nineties, she wrote a column for the *Washington Post* on health reform. Between 2003 and 2013 she directed AIR's Health Program. She has been an associate professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, a senior analyst at the Congressional Budget Office, and the founding director of the Public Policy Institute of the American Association of Retired Persons.

Dr. Moon's earlier work focused on health care financing and public policy issues with a particular emphasis on Medicare



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costs and its impact on access to care. From 2008 through 2012, she chaired the Maryland Health Care Commission. She has served on a number of boards for non-profit organizations, including the Medicare Rights Center and the National Academy of Social Insurance. She is a member of the Institute of Medicine.

George Rebok

Senior Advisor, Center on Aging at AIR



George Rebok is an Institute Fellow at AIR and a senior advisor for its Center on Aging. He also co-directs Project Talent work with AIR's Susan Lapham. A professor in the Department of Mental Health in the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins, he is a noted life-span developmental psychologist whose research focuses on early life risk and protective factors for later life health and function and on the impact of community-based preventive interventions on younger children and older adults.

Dr. Rebok has written or co-written more than 160 peer reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters on life-span developmental psychology, preventive intervention trials, cognitive aging, developmental neuropsychology, and public mental health. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, the Association for Psychological Science and the Gerontological Society of America.

Michelle Carlson

Associate Professor, Center on Aging and Health, Johns Hopkins University



Michelle Carlson leads observational studies and randomized controlled trials to identify and evaluate the impact of social, physical and cognitive engagement and volunteer service on older adults' cognitive

and brain health. Dr. Carlson is now expanding upon the use of mobile technology with the goal of empowering aging adults in the digital health revolution to remain active by tracking, delaying, and managing cognitive and functional declines. Through this work, Dr. Carlson seeks to define how socially and cognitively enriching activity in daily life helps to buffer the brain, delay Alzheimer's disease and help individuals age in place.

Tony Gentry

Associate Professor, Occupational Therapy, Virginia Commonwealth University



Tony Gentry is an associate professor in the occupational therapy department at Virginia Commonwealth University. A graduate of Harvard College (BA), New York University (MA OT) and the University of Virginia (PhD), Dr. Gentry is a specialist in neurological rehabilitation whose research career has focused on assistive technology for cognition. Dr. Gentry has developed and directed innovative programs for individuals with neurological impairments, including a vision rehabilitation clinic, a multi-disciplinary, community-based brain injury day rehabilitation program and an online clinical training curriculum for brain injury practitioners. He is the director of the Assistive Technology for Cognition laboratory at VCU, which conducts research into the development and utilization of smart homes, electronic cognitive aids, computer games and telehealth applications to support individuals with brain injury, autism and other neurological conditions. Dr. Gentry has created a prototype interactive social skills game played by super hero avatars, called Super School. He has established smart homes for people with cognitive behavioral challenges for Virginia's Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services and at the McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center Skilled Nursing Facility, Richmond. He has recently published findings from a NIDRR-funded multi-year study of mobile devices as vocational support aids

in autism and a TATRC-funded, multi-year study of smartphone-linked biofeedback coaching for veterans with mTBI and PTSD.

Dr. Gentry is on the full-time faculty of VCU's occupational therapy department, where he teaches courses in adult physical disability, supervision and management and assistive technology. In partnership with his wife, he owns and operates Neurological Expert Therapies, LLC, a rehabilitation therapy company that provides home-based and mobile technological supports and therapies.

Robin Lea West

Professor, Everyday Memory and Aging, University of Florida



Robin West, professor of psychology at the University of Florida, conducts research on everyday memory and aging, focusing on training and self-regulatory factors that enhance memory (e.g., goal-setting, self-efficacy). Dr. West completed her Ph.D. at Vanderbilt University and postdoctoral work at the Aging and Development Program at Washington University in St. Louis. She served as director of the Center for Gerontological Studies and associate director of the Institute on Aging at UF. Dr. West has served on the editorial boards of three national research journals, including *Psychology and Aging*, and is the author of more than 70 academic papers, and two popular memory books: *Memory Fitness Over 40* (published in four countries), and the *Everyday Memory Clinic Workbook*.

Dr. West recently received the M.P. Lawton Distinguished Contribution Award for Applied Gerontology from the American Psychological Association (Division 20) in recognition of "contributions that have improved the quality of life of older persons," including her research and extensive community involvement in training workshops and public speeches for lay audiences on the topic of memory and how to improve memory

in aging. Other major awards include a Fulbright Fellowship to Israel, teaching and mentoring awards (national as well as UF), and a MindAlert award from the American Society on Aging for her Everyday Memory Clinic training program.

Michael Kirsch

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer



Michael P. Kirsch joined AIR as executive vice president and chief operating officer in March 2014. Dr. Kirsch is an accomplished senior executive with more than 25 years of experience in leading and managing projects, people and organizations. He is a strategic and analytical thinker with a unique ability to create effective linkages between business infrastructure and program units to achieve corporate objectives. Prior to joining AIR, Dr. Kirsch served as senior vice president for Labor and Human Services and chief operating officer at IMPAQ International.

Over the course of his career, Dr. Kirsch has directed numerous policy-oriented research and evaluation studies of government programs using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Dr. Kirsch has worked for federal, state and local government clients, including the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Agriculture, Treasury and Transportation; the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development; the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Michigan; and Riverside County (CA), Fairfax County (VA) and Montgomery County (MD), as well as for selected firms in the private sector.