Pilot and Exploratory Studies Core (PESC)
Wake Forest Pepper Center Open House - January 21, 2021

Core Leaders:
  Thomas Register, PhD and Dalane Kitzman, MD

Leadership Intern:
  Jingzhong Ding, PhD

Staff:
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PESC Goals and Aims

**Goal:**
Support studies needed for the design of definitive, externally funded, translational research projects that promote the WF OAIC mission

**Specific Aims:**
- Identify & promote promising key areas of research
- Identify & recruit talented investigators from complementary fields in conjunction with Research Education Component (REC)
- Solicit & facilitate competitive research proposals
- Conduct peer review to select best science and career development opportunities
- Coach & mentor investigative teams to maximize the quality of research
- Team with other WF OAIC cores to support pilot projects and mentor early career investigators to advance their development as successful translational scientists
- Evaluate and optimize OAIC PESC processes and procedures
Request for Applications: Early Fall 2021

Innovative, multidisciplinary, and translational approaches are encouraged
Examples include assessing potential roles of:
- Body composition, musculoskeletal phenotypes
- Peripheral and/or central nervous system
- Bioenergetics / mitochondrial function
- Age-related changes to specific organ systems
- Cellular, biofluid, tissue, & genomic biomarkers (Geroscience)
- Physical and/or cognitive function in patient-centered outcomes

Full pilots, Ancillary studies, Analyses of databases/biorepositories (IASDR)

Eligibility Information
- Basic science and clinical research projects
- Faculty from Reynolda or Medical Center campuses
- Letter of Intent Required: Early queries / consultation recommended
Types of PESC Supported Projects

- **Pilot Studies** up to $25,000 / year for up to 2 years.
- **Developmental projects** may arise from proposed pilots which may be resource / program building.

- **Ignition Pilots** ~$5,000 to obtain critical data for moving projects or proposals forward to funding.
- **Exploratory Studies** to generate early proof of principle data or utilize existing databases.
  
  Awarded via ad-hoc review based on merit & resource availability, may be proposed at any time, sometimes a pre-pilot for a full pilot.
Pilot Study Review Criteria

(2 Internal, 1 External, 1 Statistical Reviewer)

1) Relevance to the WF OAIC theme
2) Scientific merit - innovation, originality, potential to advance knowledge
3) Appropriate study design, measures, and sample size to address proposed aims
4) Involvement of early career investigators committed to aging research, and senior investigators from other fields
5) Potential to lead to extramurally funded projects / high-impact publications
6) Use of multiple OAIC Cores
7) For clinical studies: Inclusion of women and minorities
2012 – 2020 PESC Investigators
Examples: Pepper Pilot Core Success Stories (2021 Update)

- **Anthony Molina (2012 pilot) (REC Scholar)**
  - 10 Publications, Multiple collaborations (new RO1s)
  - 6+ Externally funded grant awards:
    - AHA Grant, R21, 2 R01s, U01, R56, supplements
    - Bioenergetics Lab designated an Institutional Core Resource

- **Clark Files (2012 pilot) (REC Scholar)**
  - 4 publications
    - K08 funded, MPI R01 funded

- **Christina Hugenschmidt (2012 pilot) (REC Scholar)**
  - 2 publications, K01 awarded, R01 funded

- **Osvaldo Delbono (2013 pilot)**
  - 9 Publications, 2 R01s
    - Early Stage Investigators: Doctoral Research of Alexander Birbrair, PhD; AFAR Scholarship & 2015 Outstanding Doctoral Student Award; Doctoral Research of Anna Zaia Rodrigues, PhD; graduated 2020. Supplement to R01AG057013 NIH Minority Supplement: Henry Bonilla
PESC Plans 2021

RFA > EARLY FALL 2021

CONTACT US WITH IDEAS AND QUESTIONS!!!

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