

Laura L. Dugan, M.D. Joins UCSD As Hillblom Chair in Geriatrics

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Geriatrics specialist Laura L. Dugan, M.D. joins the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine faculty February 1, 2005 as the first physician-scientist to hold the Hillblom Chair in Geriatrics. She will hold joint appointments in UCSD's Departments of Medicine and Neurosciences.

In addition to promoting healthy aging in a special diagnostic and treatment clinic for older patients, Dugan will continue her research into the molecular mechanics of aging. She is attempting to define the role of free radical oxidative injury in stroke or trauma, as well as in chronic neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). A second area of research focuses on development and characterization of a class of potent anti-oxidant compounds known as buckyballs, as potential therapy for age-related diseases.

"We are very fortunate to have Dr. Dugan join us to lead our geriatrics program," said Kenneth Kaushansky, M.D. chair of the UCSD Department of Medicine. "Her understanding of the aging process on the molecular and cellular levels will lend themselves to the translation of important new insights from the laboratory into patient care. In addition, she will bring the problems she sees in patients back to the lab for investigations into causes and potential therapies to enhance aging."

Dugan joins UCSD from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, where she was an associate professor of Neurology, Medicine/Geriatrics, and Anatomy and Neurobiology Her educational background includes a B.S. in life sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an M.D. from Ohio State University School of Medicine, and residency training at Children's Hospital of San Francisco, a UC San Francisco affiliate. She completed a fellowship in Geriatric Medicine at Stanford University, where she also conducted research on aging.

Among the journals in which she has extensively published are the *Journal of Neurosciences*, *Nature Medicine*, the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, and *Cellular and Molecular Biology*. She has presented her work widely and is the recipient of several awards including the Hartford Award for Research in Geriatric Medicine a Paul Beeson Physician-Scholars Award.

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