



2022 Impact Report

UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Health

To our community:

Health equity is at the core of everything we do at the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Health. Our shared values of health justice, compassion, and collaboration shape our practices and programs, and we aim to have our center demonstrate the ways in which equity and integrative care can heal, build trust, and strengthen all of us.

This past year, we focused on increasing access and building community among the people we serve. We embraced models of group medical visits in our clinical care and focus group interviews in our research and expanded class offerings to online formats to reach more people from disparate areas.

Aside from greatly increasing access to care and participation, another wonderful outcome of these group activities is that patients and participants learn from each other in addition to learning from UCSF Osher Center professionals. We are all experts in our own experience, and by creating spaces in which to share and learn in community, our group programming features yet another benefit of integrative health care.

We have moved many of our clinical visits, classes, and trainings to online formats to increase accessibility and embrace this expanded community, but we recognize the value of in-person connections when possible. Our cohort of predoctoral and postdoctoral research fellows, for example, is again meeting on-site each month to spend time connecting and learning from each other.

We are proud of the community we have built and continue to grow. On behalf of all of us at the UCSF Osher Center, thank you for your friendship and support.

Sincerely,



Shelley R. Adler, PhD
Director, UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Health
Osher Center Distinguished Professor of Integrative Health



“It’s important to infuse equity into everything we do. One aspect of this is improving access to integrative health and providing quality care for all, particularly individuals from historically underserved populations.”

Maria Chao, DrPH, MPA



Improving Access to Acupuncture

Acupuncture stimulates healing and reduces pain symptoms in patients with many conditions – from arthritis and fibromyalgia to chronic back pain.

To increase access and reduce wait times for care, the UCSF Osher Center launched A Group Acupuncture Program for Equity (AGAPE). The

group acupuncture model allows practitioners to treat multiple patients at the same time in a large, welcoming space. Patients remain fully clothed and receive acupuncture in chairs or on massage tables.

The AGAPE pilot ran from March through October and was supported by the Mount Zion Health Fund. Racially and ethnically diverse patients with chronic pain, a majority of whom were low income, received up to six sessions of group acupuncture at no charge.

“We’ve heard from patients that they’ve needed less pain medication, are sleeping better, and are doing more activities of daily living,” says lead acupuncturist and co-investigator Helen Ye, MS, LAc, who led the AGAPE pilot. “Their providers are thrilled since it gives them another way to help patients, and clinic support staff members



Erin Reilly, LAc, provides acupuncture in a group setting.

say patients are coming to appointments less stressed.”

Maria Chao, DrPH, MPA, associate director of research, is analyzing the pilot data to better understand the benefits of the group model in a diverse patient cohort. She notes that recruiting participants for the pilot expanded referrals from UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion and increased access to nonpharmacological approaches to chronic pain. All patients reported being satisfied with their overall experience, and 92% reported improved symptoms from group acupuncture.

The team is now looking for ways to expand the program to multiple spaces to reach more patients.

Tools for Better Sleep During Pregnancy

Sleep problems are common during pregnancy, with as many as 75% of pregnant people reporting poor sleep quality and 38% reporting elevated insomnia symptoms. These challenges can result in more than just a tired parent-to-be: Poor sleep quality is associated with depression, preterm birth, and other negative outcomes.

Existing treatments for sleep problems do not address the unique factors that disturb sleep for many pregnant people – namely, physical discomfort and pain. Recognizing the need for additional sleep solutions for pregnant people, the UCSF Osher Center launched Research on Improving Sleep

During Pregnancy (RISE), led by Jennifer Felder, PhD, a research faculty member at the UCSF Osher Center, with assistance from clinical research coordinator Riya Mirchandaney. The team hypothesized that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) might give pregnant people tools for coping with nightly physical discomfort and pain, thereby helping them sleep better.

The RISE study pilot-tested an eight-week MBSR course of brief, weekly, prenatal sleep classes with 52 pregnant people. The MBSR classes provided instruction in meditation practices like awareness of breath, body scans, yoga, mindful walking, and sitting meditation that draw attention to thoughts and feelings. The prenatal sleep classes provided education about prenatal, postpartum, and infant sleep and taught behavioral techniques for improving sleep.

“Research shows that how people respond to physical symptoms also affects sleep – if you respond with frustration or anger, sleep will be worse than if you have tools that help you accept and relax,” Dr. Felder says.

A bonus of learning these techniques: They can help new parents cope with the inevitable sleep disturbances of having a newborn. In addition, the RISE study provides a group setting to connect expectant parents with one another, allowing participants to bond over shared experiences.

Participants were enthusiastic about their experience, and data analysis is now underway.

The educational benefits have extended to Mirchandaney, who joined the UCSF Osher Center in 2020, soon after college graduation. “Dr. Felder serves as a model of the researcher I’d like to be,” she says.

Finding Calm and Community During Cancer Care

Integrative oncologists Chloe Atreya, MD, PhD, and Kavita K. Mishra, MD, MPH, are co-leading group oncology visits, in which cohorts of eight patients learn

mindfulness-based techniques to ease their cancer symptoms and treatment side effects.

Among the topics and techniques covered are:

- Meditative movement, including yoga.
- Mind-body practices for sleep and fatigue.
- Mindful eating.
- Mindfulness practices for emotional regulation.

These evidence-based interventions, recommended by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and the American Cancer Society, can help



Chloe Atreya, MD, PhD, and Kavita K. Mishra, MD, MPH



“ The beauty of the integrative approach is the way it empowers patients.”

Kavita K. Mishra, MD, MPH

alleviate common symptoms such as anxiety, depression, distress, fatigue, and pain. Participants also get to know one another and sometimes even synchronize their chemotherapy infusions so they can meet in person.

“Our patients are learners as we go through the experience together, but the group model allows them to be teachers too, giving each other the wisdom of their experience,” Dr. Mishra says.

Group members complete periodic surveys so the investigators can learn the short- and longer-term impact of mind-body practices and make adjustments for future groups. In addition, Dr. Atreya and Dr. Mishra aim to include diverse participants to address disparities in access to integrative cancer care.

It’s fulfilling, they say, to see participants bring the techniques into their daily lives and find meaning and even joy during a difficult experience.

Enhanced Well-Being for Independence in Elderhood

Most older adults want to “age in place” – or stay in their own homes for as long as possible. That can become difficult if age-related changes, disease, or disability interfere with mobility and self-sufficiency.

The UCSF Osher Center is hosting a group visit program through its Integrative Aging Clinic, led by integrative geriatrician Louise Aronson, MD, MFA, to educate and empower older adults in maintaining and improving their well-being by:

- Recognizing opportunities to improve health at any age with help from gerontologists.
- Modifying their home environment for ongoing independence with advice from architects.
- Growing and retaining social networks and other supportive relationships with insights from social workers.
- Finding new sources of purpose and meaning as they move through the decades of older age.



Louise Aronson, MD, MFA, with a patient at the UCSF Osher Center Clinic

“This is where integrative techniques are so helpful, because they consider health and not just disease,” Dr. Aronson says. “While we engage with the caregiving team, we empower the patient and keep their needs, wishes, and well-being central.”

The 90-minute group meetings are held weekly on Zoom with assigned home activities between sessions for participants to apply what they’ve learned and share experiences with their group. In addition, the medical group-visit model means no costs for participants and increased efficiencies for the clinic and health system.

The program’s evidence-based techniques draw from interdisciplinary programs shown to reduce hospitalizations and emergency

department visits and delay the need for assisted living.

“Staying active can be transformational at any age,” says Dr. Aronson, who is also a professor in the UCSF Division of Geriatrics. “You can build functional and muscle strength into your 80s and 90s. You don’t have to make giant transformations to see a difference. We teach participants to take small steps.”

Dr. Aronson is gathering data for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant application. She plans to conduct studies of the model in cooperation with the Osher Centers at Northwestern University and Harvard University.

Extending the Benefits of Integrative Mental Health Care

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) combines meditation practices from MBSR with cognitive-behavioral therapy to improve mental health and chronic pain. But what are the best ways to ensure long-lasting benefits?

The UCSF Osher Center hopes to learn more through a study led by Rick Hecht, MD, Osher Foundation Professor in Research in Integrative Health, UCSF Osher Center director of research; Shelley Adler, PhD, director of the UCSF Osher Center; and research specialist Patricia Moran, PhD. They conducted focus groups composed of learners who had completed an eight-week MBCT course two or more years previously. Participants were asked about strategies that helped them maintain their MBCT practice and sustain its benefits, any barriers to maintaining

practices following an MBCT course, and potential MBCT maintenance approaches they would find most acceptable.

The team also convened focus groups with MBCT instructors to learn the teachers’ perspectives.

“The MBCT courses are intensive, with weekly meetings plus daily homework,” Dr. Moran says. “But then they’re left on their own. One participant described feeling as if they’d fallen off a cliff when the course ended. We heard that an eight-week course may not be enough for some people to fully absorb the materials and develop a long-lasting practice.”

The team is now preparing to test a booster program that could reinforce MBCT skills.

Chelsea Siwik, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow in the UCSF Osher Center’s NIH-funded research training program, says being part of this study is a wonderful aspect of her fellowship.



Chelsea Siwik, PhD, and Patricia Moran, PhD

“Learning to develop and test integrative interventions is one of my training goals, so the opportunity to be involved in this project has been key to my career development,” Dr. Siwik says. “I have learned a great deal and am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to collaborate and learn from leading experts in this area.”

“ At the core of hospital-based massage are comfort, care, and listening. ”

Carolyn Tague, MA, CMT



Expanding the Field of Hospital-Based Massage

Anyone who has had a massage knows that it has therapeutic benefits. For hospital inpatients, massage can also ease pain and nausea as well as lessen depression and loneliness.

“Our sessions focus on individual patients’ needs, moving slowly and giving them their own healing experience,” says UCSF Osher Center massage therapist Carolyn Tague, MA, CMT. “Especially for patients who are not having visitors and feel isolated, that human interaction can make a huge difference.”

The UCSF Osher Center is expanding the number of massage therapists trained in this specialized setting through the Advanced Training and Hospital-Based Massage Therapy Program, which Tague oversees. Each cohort includes trained and licensed massage therapists who undergo a part-time, yearlong training that includes classroom instruction and direct patient care on the hospital floors.

One recent trainee, Lydia-Carlie Tilus, is a doula and advanced neuromuscular therapist who hopes to support her patients’ wellness before, during, and after birth. She says that

the fellowship, mentorship from Tague, and connections with her cohort of fellows were life-changing.

“I feel like all of us in the fellowship program are blazing a trail within our own specialty areas. What we have in common is a passion to bring therapeutic touch to people who need us,” she says. “The program did a good job of teaching us how to adapt our skills to be part of a medical team.”

Training the Next Generation of Physicians in Integrative Health

The Osher Collaborative Faculty Fellowship, a yearlong advanced training program for physicians in any specialty, is helping infuse integrative techniques into clinics across the country.

Fellows participate in online instruction, immersive experiential activities, and intensive clinical mentorship. They also develop a scholarly project for in-depth study of a topic of interest. In addition, a key element of the fellowship is teaching self-care techniques to help enhance physicians’ well-being and avoid burnout. Each session begins with a five-

minute guided meditation, and fellows are encouraged to take lunch breaks with a focus on mindful eating.

The fellowship’s co-directors are Anand Dhruva, MD, Osher Foundation Professor of Education in Integrative Health and the UCSF Osher Center’s director of education, and Melinda Ring, MD, director of Northwestern University’s Osher Center for Integrative Health. Invited lecturers from the 11 member institutions across the Osher Collaborative also bring their expertise to the training.

The third cohort began training in July 2022, with 11 fellows.

Nicole Henderson, the inaugural Osher Collaborative education program manager, says fellows can immediately apply integrative techniques, wherever they practice.

“Our goal is for these faculty members to take what they learn back to their institutions and promote integrative health in research, patient care, education, and even health care policy advocacy,” says Henderson, who notes that the program is continually evaluating its methods and enhancing its teaching techniques to optimize student experiences.

The Osher Collaborative recently launched an alumni newsletter to highlight past fellows’ successes and encourage networking. The program will accept applications from nurse practitioners and physician assistants for the 2023-2024 cohort.

“ The fellowship was integral to developing my practice as an integrative oncologist. My cohort included clinicians from across the spectrum of medicine. It was such a unique experience to see how integrative medicine can be applied in every field of health and to learn from our instructors and each other. ”

Shannon Fogh, MD, Integrative Oncologist,
UCSF Department of Radiation Oncology



UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Health

**1545 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94115**

**Mailing address:
UCSF Box 1726
San Francisco, CA 94143
osher.ucsf.edu**

Thank you for your support of the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Health.

For more information about the UCSF Osher Center and how you can contribute to its mission, please contact:
Sarah Krumholz, Senior Director of University Development,
at **(415) 509-5309** or **sarah.krumholz@ucsf.edu**.