

UST Geriatrics Interest Group: Exploring interprofessional health students' interest and knowledge in geriatrics

Frukan Ileaasu^{1,2}, Marta Stetsiv^{1,2}

Team Leads and Coaches: Elizabeth Silver^{1,2}, Kelly Ho^{1,4}, Carlos Cardenas^{1,3}

¹Urban Health/AHEC Scholar, ²UConn School of Medicine, ³UConn School of Dental Medicine, ⁴UConn School of Nursing

Abstract

The Geriatric population (65 years and older) is projected to reach 80.8 million by 2040, up from 54.1 million in 2019 (1). As we move towards an increasingly older population we need to find novel ways for individuals to make the best of the challenges they face daily. This calls for innovation to support more years of well-being, and working towards the kind of healthcare system we will need in the future.

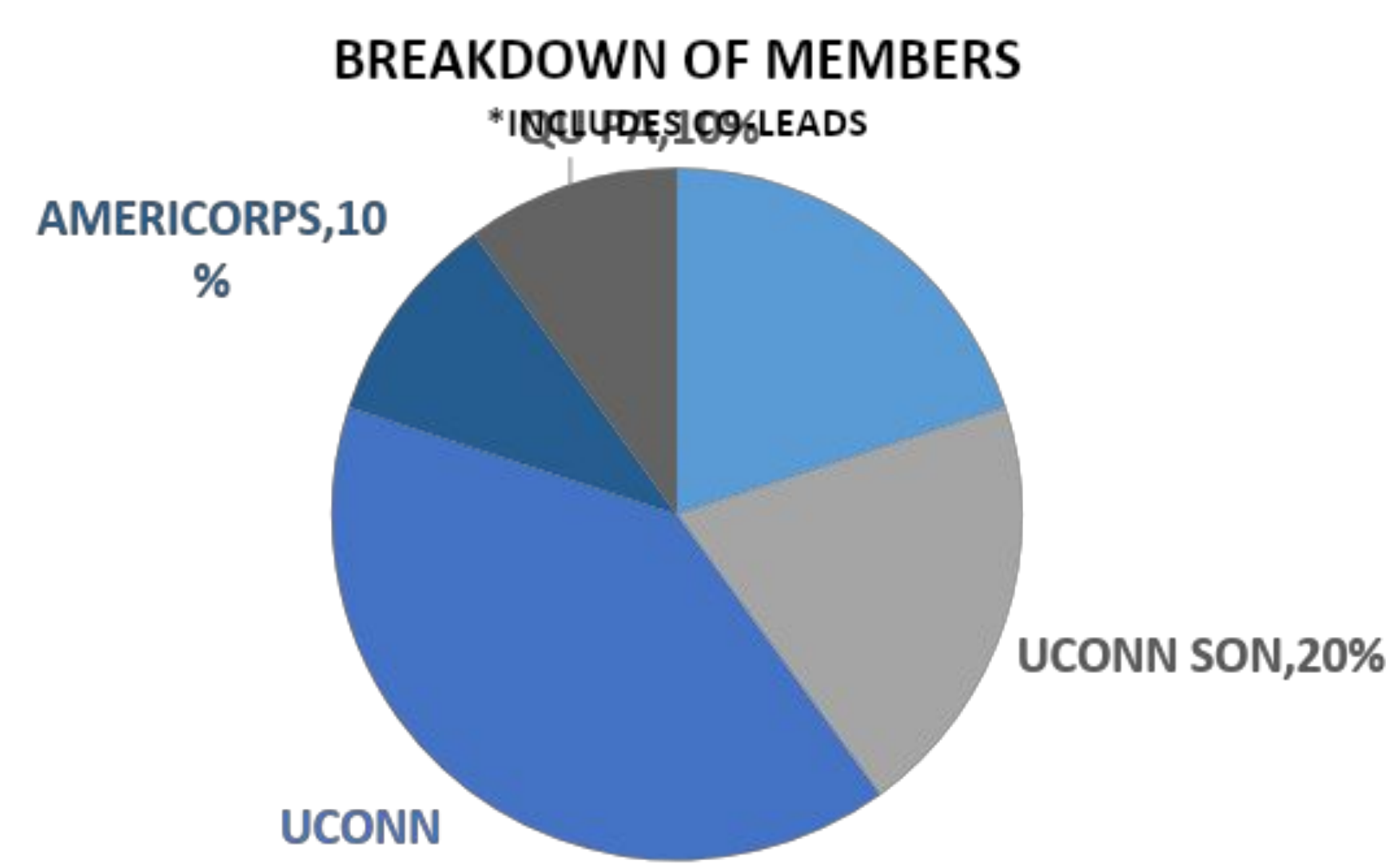
The Urban Service Track (UST) Geriatrics Interest Group (IG) is a student-led and student-centered group that engages students from various health disciplines on the unique needs of the geriatric community through participation in monthly interactive meetings. In accordance with students' expressed interests, Co-leads invited Geriatric experts to share their expertise in various topics of interests followed by interactive question/answer sessions. Members also participated in trainings such as Dementia Friends and Narcan administration. Post-meetings surveys were administered to the topics we plan to explore during the next meeting, feedback was strongly encouraged.

Background

The UST/AHEC Scholars Program is 2 year interactive and service oriented curriculum that focuses on providing care and health education to Connecticut's underserved, urban and rural communities through interprofessional collaboration.

The UST IG is a student-led initiative consisting of seven interest groups focusing on Geriatrics, healthcare advocacy and policy, pediatrics, social justice, adolescents, behavioral and mental health, and women's health.

The Geriatric IG is an interprofessional team of 12 healthcare students led by Kelly Ho, SON and Elizabeth Silver, SOM, senior scholar coach Carlos Cardenas, SODM, and UST alumni partner Patricia Bowen, MSW, JD. Other group members include scholars representing The University of Connecticut Schools of Nursing (SON), Pharmacy (SOP), Medicine (SOM), Dental Medicine, and Social, AmeriCorps as well as Quinnipiac University's Physician Assistant Program (QU PA).



Objectives

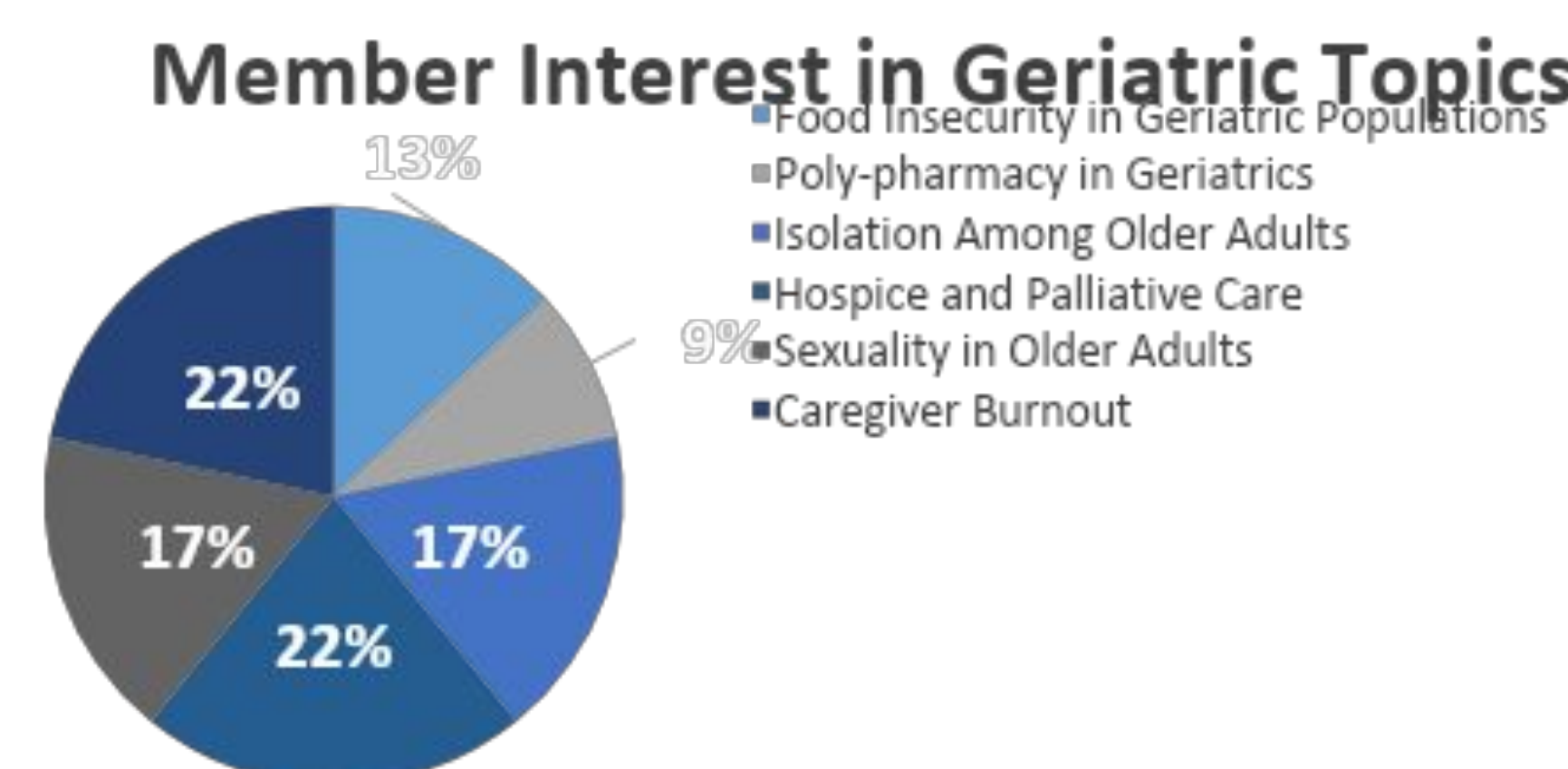
1. Identify and address topics of interests in geriatric health
2. Strengthen scholars interest in working with geriatrics
3. Reinforce the importance of inter-professionalism in geriatric health
4. Engage scholars in interactive educational activities with guidance from geriatric experts

Methods of Data Analysis

- UST members were sorted into their respective Interest Groups based on survey results of their interests
- 6 IG meetings took place virtually on a monthly basis between October 2021 – March 2022
- Co-leads administered pre-meeting surveys via Google Forms to gauge interest topics and set agendas with appropriate speakers
- Pre-meeting materials such as journal articles, videos, and resource guides were shared with members to prepare for a productive discussion
- Guest speakers and content experts led informational and discussion sessions, with interactive Q&A
- Inter-professional sessions included mock patient cases, where members composed a problem list and assessment, assigned roles and responsibilities, and came up with resources to connect their patient to for improved health outcomes
- Post-event surveys were administered to collect feedback and assess student engagement

Results

Fig. 1: Pre-Meeting Survey Results Gauging Member Interest in Topics Pertaining to Geriatrics



Surveys were administered prior to monthly IG meeting to gauge member interests in geriatric topics to guide future meeting agendas with additional input from the group coaches and alumni partners. Topics of interest included: food insecurity, poly-pharmacy, isolation among older adults, hospice and palliative care, sexuality in older adults, and caregiver burnout.

Table 1: Monthly Meeting Presenters and Topics

Month	Presenter	Affiliation	Main Topic
October	Elizabeth Silver, Kelly Ho, Carlos Cardenas	UConn Storrs, UConn Health Center	Assigning Roles and Positions
November	Dr. Kristina Zdanys	UConn Health Center	Geriatric Psychiatry
December	Patricia Bowen, JD, LMSW	AHEC UConn	Hospice and Palliative Care
January	Tia Kozar	UConn Health	Dementia Friends Training
February	Victoria Kozar & Connor Johnson	UConn SOM	A Conversation on Caring for LGBT+ Older Adults

Post Meeting Surveys and Responses

What did you learn/stood out the most to you?

- Learning from different perspectives, loved everything
- How to treat geriatric patients with detailed attention and respect, especially Dementia Friends training, it was beautiful to see how to make them feel heard.
- Ability to bring these topics to future clinical practice and how to be an ally to the aging community
- Making individual with dementia less anxious and more comfortable
- Dementia training and presentation stood out and made me more confident in helping adults with dementia
- Learning about topics and seeing passionate content experts

What would you like us to change in the future for next year's group?

- More community services
- A talk about Geriatric Sexuality
- All topics were applicable and helpful
- Perhaps shorter meetings, but really great topic every sessions
- I would like to see more training meetings
- More outreach, developing and implementation of some health education at local senior centers

What do you think of the leadership style and what should be done differently?

- "Wonderful, perfect, amazing"
- "Maybe more frequent check ins"
- "Did an amazing job setting agendas"
- "Wonderful leadership! Reminders and forms were super helpful"
- "I think the co-leads, coaches and alumni partner did an amazing job! They led an organized group and were open to group input whenever possible"

Discussion and Conclusion

- The Geriatric IG provided an opportunity for health professional students to learn from and with each other and how to provide optimal care to Geriatric population
- The student-led and centered nature of the IG increased engagement as scholars directed and explored topics of interests
- Through the monthly IG meetings, the importance of team-based care through the interaction with other health professional students through case presentation was highlighted and appreciated
- Post meeting surveys were vital in shaping the monthly meetings and will also be used to make quality improvements for the second half of the Geriatric IG curriculum
- Based on survey feedback, the IG will incorporate more community service and educational opportunities next year

References

1. <https://acl.gov/aging-and-disability-in-america/data-and-research/projected-future-growth-older-population> Citation
2. CT AHEC Program at UCONN Health Center Urban Service Track/AHEC Scholars Program uconn.edu/UST

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to our UST Alumni Partner Patricia Bowen, MSW, JD (pbowen@snet.net), Sundari Birdsall (sundari.birdsall@gmail.com), Shanthi Rao (shanthiom64@gmail.com), our UST Senior Coach, Carlos Cardenas-Peralta, DS-3 (cardenasperalta@uconn.edu), and our guest speakers for supporting the Geriatric IG.