



**Optimizing brain and cognitive health:  
Now: What works?  
Future: What's on the horizon?**

**April 8-10, 2026**  
University of Arizona

**Wednesday, April 8, 2026**

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**Location:** Westward Look Wyndham Grand Resort  
245 East Ina Road  
Tucson, Arizona  
520-297-1151

**Pre-meetings**

9:00 – 12:00 **Precision Aging** -Moderators: Ron Lazar, Carol Barnes (Desert Room)  
**Neuromodulation** -Moderators: Keith McGregor, John Williamson (Palm Room)

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch all Pre-meeting groups (Palm Room)

12:00 – 5:00 PM **MBRF Board Meeting** (Cholla Room)

1:00 – 4:00pm **Artificial Intelligence** -Moderators: Ihtsham Haq, Arne Ekstrom (Desert Room)

5:30 – 7:30pm Reception and Dinner (Sonoran Ballroom).  
6:00 – 6:15pm Introduction of Speakers:  
Dr. Carol Barnes, Director, Evelyn F. McKnight Institute,  
University of Arizona  
Remarks from:  
Dr. Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, Senior Vice President for  
Research and Partnerships, University of Arizona  
Dr. Mike Dockery, Chair, McKnight Brain Research  
Foundation  
Dr. Molly Wagster, Chief, Division of Neuroscience,  
National Institute on Aging

**Thursday April 9, 2026**

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7:00 - 8:00 Breakfast (Sonoran Rooftop)

8:00 - 8:30 **Welcome and Introduction** (Sonoran Ballroom)  
Dr. Mike Dockery, MBRF  
Dr. Carol A. Barnes, Director, Tucson EMBI  
Dean Carmala Garziona, College of Science, UA, Tucson  
Dr. Molly Wagster, NIA

## Topic: What works with respect to nutrition? How do we implement what we know?

**Moderator:** Bonnie Levin (UM)

8:30– 9:00	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> Dr. Sarah L. Booth Tufts University Title: <i>Aging and Nutrition: what advice arises from fact, what is myth?</i>
9:00 - 9:10	Discussion
9:10 – 9:25	Dr. Sara Burke (UF) Title: <i>Who is a ketogenic diet good for?</i>
9:25- 9:30	Discussion
9:30 – 9:45	Dr. Hannah Gardener (UM) Title: <i>Does a Mediterranean diet promote brain and cognitive health in aging populations?</i>
9:45 – 9:50	Discussion
9:50 – 10:15	Break
10:15 -10:30	Dr. Suzanne Judd (UAB) Title: <i>Diet and brain health in aging</i>
10:30 – 10:35	Discussion
10:35 -10:55	Dr. Sarah Booth Precision Nutrition: <i>The future – and how do we implement better dietary habits to promote brain health</i>
10:55 -11:15	<b>Panel discussion</b> – all speakers, <b>Moderator:</b> Sara Burke (UF)
11:15 – 12:15pm	Lunch (Sonoran Rooftop)

## Topics to watch for in the future

### Peripheral Inflammation and the Brain: Exploring Senolytics as an Intervention

**Moderator:** Ron Lazar (UAB)

12:15 – 12:45	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> Dr. Miranda Orr Washington University School of Medicine Title: <i>Senolytics: what are they, do they show promise beyond Alzheimer's disease for improving cognition?</i>
12:45 – 12:55	Discussion
12:55 – 1:10	Dr. Tom Foster (UF) Title: <i>Cell senescence, sex and senolytics</i>
1:10 – 1:15	Discussion
1:15 – 1:30	Dr. Pablo de Rivero Vaccari (UM) Title: <i>Contribution of the Inflammasome to Inflammaging</i>
1:30 – 1:35	Discussion
1:35 – 1:50	Dr. Davis Englund (UAB)

- 1:50 – 1:55 Title: *Targeting senescent cells to reduce systemic inflammation and promote healthy aging*  
Discussion
- 1:55 – 2:15 **Panel discussion** – all speakers, **Moderator:** Tom Foster (UF)
- 2:15 – 2:30 Break

## Neurostimulation and Brain Clearance Pathways: A New Frontier in Cognitive Health

**Moderator:** Ihtsham Haq (UM)

- 2:30 - 3:00 **Keynote Speaker**  
Dr. Qiuting Wen  
Indiana University School of Medicine  
Title: *MR Imaging of CSF Dynamics*
- 3:00- 3:10 Discussion
- 3:10 – 3:25 Dr. Keith McGregor (UAB)  
Title *Training the Brain's Brakes: Neuromodulation for Inhibitory Control in Aging?*
- 3:25 – 3:30 Discussion
- 3:30 – 3:45 Dr. Ying-Hui Chou (UA)  
Title: *TMS, Glymphatic Function, and Plasticity Reserve in Mild Cognitive Impairment*
- 3:45 – 3:50 Discussion
- 3:50 – 4:10 **Panel discussion** – all speakers, **Moderator:** Lee Ryan (UA)

## Collaborative Pilot Projects Highlights

**Moderator:** Jen Bizon (UF)

- 4:10 – 4:20 Dr. Arne Ekstrom (UA)  
Title: *Training new navigation skills in older adults using virtual reality and peripheral target detection: A preliminary update*
- 4:20 – 4:25 Discussion
- 4:25 – 4:35 Dr. Ashley Huggins (UA)  
Title: *Neurobiology of fear generalization: understanding cognitive and emotional health in postmenopausal women*
- 4:35 – 4:40 Discussion
- 4:40 – 4:50 Dr. Caesar Hernandez (UAB)  
Title: *Effects of age and sex on fear generalization and the underlying hormonal contributions.*
- 4:50 – 4:55 Discussion
- 4:55– 5:05 Dr. Eric Porges (UF)  
Title: *Effect of Alcohol Reduction and Probiotic Interventions on Cognition and Brain Glucose Metabolism in Normal Aging Adults who are High-Risk Alcohol Drinkers*
- 5:05 – 5:10 Discussion
- 5:30 Board buses for Tohono Chul Gardens
- 5:45 Reception, remarks, Dr. Lee Ryan, Dr. Mike Dockery  
Visit museum and gardens  
Dinner

8:00 first bus leaves for Westward Look

## Friday April 10, 2026

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- 6:30 – 8:00 Breakfast, Hotel checkout if not participating in post-meeting activities
- 7:00 – 8:00 Leadership breakfast with MBRF Trustees (by invitation)
- 8:15 Board buses to go to the University of Arizona campus
- 9:30 Morning Sessions in the Planetarium
- 9:30-11:00 **Data Blitz Session 1**  
**Moderator:** Tanja Rundek (UM)
- 9:30-9:35 Dr. Virendra Mishra (UAB)  
Title: *Unimodal and Multimodal Neuroimaging Approaches to Map Glymphatic Function*
- 9:35 –9:40 Discussion
- 9:40-9:45 Dr. Mark Sundman (UA)  
Title: *Can TMS Enhance Cerebral Waste Clearance? Evidence of Glymphatic Modulation with DTI-ALP*
- 9:45-9:50 Discussion
- 9:50- 9:55 Dr. Lilah M. Besser (UM)  
Title: *Neighborhood social and built environments that support healthy brain aging*
- 9:55-10:00 Discussion
- 10:00 - 10:15 Break
- 10:15 – 11:15 **Data Blitz Session 2/ Pre-meeting report outs**  
**Moderator:** Dr. Kristina Visscher (UAB)
- 11:15 – 11:20 Dr. Barry Setlow (UF)  
Title: *APOE genotype and intertemporal choice; relevance for trajectories of cognitive aging*
- 11:20 – 11:25 Discussion
- 11:25 – 11:30 Dr. Nan-Kuei Chen (UA)  
Title: *Multi-Contrast Brain MRI for the Study of Aging*
- 11:30 – 11:35 Discussion
- 11:35 – 11:40 Dr. Mohammad (Momo) Nafeli Shahrestani (UM)  
Title: *Serum Immune Markers as Contributors to Age-Related Cognitive Impairment*
- 11:40 – 11:45 Discussion
- 11:45 – 11:50 Pre-meeting report out topic: **Precision Aging**  
**Moderators:** Ron Lazar, Carol Barnes
- 11:50 – 11:55 Pre-meeting report out topic **Neuromodulation**  
**Moderators:** Keith McGregor, John Williamson
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- 11:55 – 12:00 Pre-meeting report out topic: **Artificial Intelligence**  
**Moderators:** Ihtsham Haq, Arne Ekstrom

- 12:00 Pick up lunch –stay for Marsha Riecke lecture on James Webb Telescope and Mirror Lab tour or leave for airport
- 12:15 Leave for Airport
- Or
- 12:15 walk to Psychology to eat lunch
- 1:00 back to Planetarium for lecture  
Professor Marsha Rieke  
Professor of Astronomy  
Title: *Photos of celestial objects taken using the near infrared camera on the James Webb Telescope*
- 1:45 Walk to the **Richard F. Caris Mirror Lab** on campus
- 2:00 – 3:30 Mirror lab 90 min tour
- 5:00 Dinner at Lee Ryan's house

For those staying over, Friday night to leave Saturday morning or later –back to Westward Look.