

Karl Pillemer

Web Bio

Information

Biography

Biographical Statement

Dr. Karl Pillemer is the Director of the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research and the Hazel E. Reed Professor in the Department of Human Development and a Professor of Gerontology in Medicine at the Weill Cornell Medical College. Pillemer also directs the Cornell Legacy Project (<http://legacyproject.human.cornell.edu/>) and is author of the book *30 Lessons for Living* (<http://legacyproject.human.cornell.edu/the-book/>). His major interests center on human development over the life course, with a special emphasis on family and social relationships in middle age and beyond. He has a strong theoretical and empirical interest in life course transitions and the effects they have on family relationships. A major program of research is on intergenerational relations in later life, with a focus on determinants and consequences of the quality of adult child - older parent relationships. Dr. Pillemer is now conducting a large-scale study of this issue, with funding from the National Institute on Aging, which focuses on within-family differences in parent-child relations in later life and on ambivalence in intergenerational relations among adults. A second major program of research focuses on the nature and dynamics of family caregiving for impaired elderly relatives, which he has been carrying out over the past two decades with funding from the National Institutes of Health. A third area is in long-term care for the elderly, with a focus on the relationships between family members of residents with staff in long-term care facilities. Fourth, Dr. Pillemer has a long-term program of research on conflict and abuse in families of the aged, including several related studies of the domestic and institutional abuse of older persons. Finally, he is actively involved in intervention research and in policy analysis related to aging and health care, with an emphasis on evidence-based methods of developing a competent, caring long-term care workforce. His extension and outreach work involves translational research, exploring ways to speed the transfer of findings from basic research into scientifically tested interventions.

Teaching

Professional

Current Professional Activities

Gerontological Society of America, American Sociological Association, National Council on Family Relations

Research

Current Research Activities

Pillemer's current research projects span his interests in aging and the family, long-term and palliative care, developing effective models for translational research, and studies of elder wisdom. This research is funded by the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute for Nursing Research, and a variety of foundation sources. Ongoing studies include the following:

- 1) The Within-Family Differences Study (NIA, in collaboration with J. Jill Suitor, Purdue University) is following 550 mothers over the age of 65 and their adult children over a 7-year period, examining the causes and consequences of within-family differentiation in later life. Analyses have focused on parental favoritism, differential helping to and by offspring, caregiver selection, and ambivalent parent-adult child relationships, among other topics.
- 2) Resident-to-Resident Elder Mistreatment (NIA, in collaboration with Mark S. Lachs, Weill Cornell Medical College) is the first large scale prevalence and risk factor study of aggression and violence among nursing home residents.
- 3) Taking Community Action against Pain (NINR, in collaboration with M. Carrington Reid, Weill Cornell Medical College) applies principles of community-based participatory research to develop more effective interventions for older persons dealing with pain.
- 4) Palliative Care: Translating Research to Practice and Policy (Lawrence and Rebecca Stern Foundation) is creating an agenda for palliative care research based on interrelated data collection efforts from researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.
- 5) The Program on Aging and the Environment (USDA) involves research and intervention studies of environmental civic engagement and volunteering by older persons.
- 6) The Cornell Legacy Project, which involves collecting data from older persons regarding their views of important lessons they have learned over the life course.
- 7) An overarching interest is in translational research, studying methods and techniques of moving research findings more swiftly into application for practice and policy.

Pillemer is also the co-Principal Investigator of an NIA-funded Roybal Center, which conducts research and evaluation on methods of improving research translation.

Extension

Current Extension Activities

Pillemer's extension program is in the area of aging and life course development. An overarching interest is promoting social integration in later life, including intervention programs to reduce social isolation and increase social engagement

among older persons. He is the co-Principal Investigator of a center grant funded by the National Institute on Aging: The Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA), one of ten Edward R. Roybal Centers nationwide. CITRA has created a community-based research partnership with major elder service providers in New York City. Through a series of "research to practice consensus workshops," an innovative pilot study grant program that funds research partnerships with community agencies, and other related programs, CITRA brings Cornell research resources to the NYC community. A new focus is developing extension and outreach programs based on his research program on elder wisdom, including an intergenerational program involving high school students in group interview projects with elders. Another program area is on pain and pain management in later life. His extension efforts also focus on improving the quality of care provided by staff in nursing homes. His group has developed, evaluated, and are disseminating Partners in Caregiving, funded by NIA and other sources. This evidence-based program improves cooperation and communication between families and staff in nursing homes. Other products include publications for the nursing home industry that provide detailed practical guidance for upgrading the job conditions of paraprofessionals. A key component of his extension work is developing programs that link the growing older population to issues of environmental sustainability. He has developed and evaluated the Retiree Environmental Stewards Program, in which older adults learn about key environmental issues and take part in leadership training, enabling them to be highly effective volunteers in environmental organizations. In his current role as the Director of the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research he is working to promote translational research models and evidence-based practice in the College.

Education

Education

Ph.D. 1985 - Brandeis University
Sociology

M.A. 1981 - Brandeis University
Sociology

B.A. 1977 - Boston University
Sociology

Courses

Courses Taught

Translational Research on Aging Research Seminar, Social Interventions to Promote Optimal Human Development; Parent-Child Relations in Later Life; Exploring Human Development

Websites

Related Websites

<http://legacyproject.human.cornell.edu/>
www.marriagelegacy.org
<http://evidencebasedliving.human.cornell.edu/>
<http://tripll.org/>

Administration

Administrative Responsibilities

Director Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research

Director, Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging

Member, Advisory Committee, Cornell Survey Research Institute

Member, Public Engagement Council

Member, President's Sustainable Campus Committee

Publications

Selected Publications

Pillemer, Karl, Connolly, M. T., Breckman, Risa, Spreng, Nathan, & Lachs, Mark S. (In press). "Elder Mistreatment: Priorities for Consideration by the White House Conference on Aging. *The Gerontologist*.

Riffin, Catherine, Pillemer, Karl, Chen, Emily., Warmington, Marcus, Adelman, Ronald D., & Reid, M. C. (in press). What's missing in palliative care research? Identifying key priorities for future investigation. *American Journal of Public Health*.

Reid, M. C., Eccleston, Christopher, & Pillemer, Karl. (In press.) "Chronic Pain in Older Adults." *British Medical Journal*.

Gilligan, Megan, J. Jill Suitor, Scott Feld, and Karl Pillemer (2015). "Do positive feelings hurt? Disaggregating positive and negative components of intergenerational ambivalence." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77, 261-276

Pillemer, K., & Suitor, J. J. (2014). Who provides care? A prospective study of caregiving among adult siblings. *The Gerontologist*, 54, 589-598.

Peterson, J. C., Burnes, D. P., Caccamise, P. L., Mason, A., ...Pillemer, K., & Lachs, M. S. (2014). "Financial exploitation of older adults: A population-based prevalence study." *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 29, 1615-1623.

Sabir, Myra and Karl Pillemer. (2014). An intensely sympathetic awareness: Experiential similarity and cultural norms as means for gaining older African Americans' trust of scientific research. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 29, 142-149.

. Eimicke, Mildred Ramirez, Stepahnie Silver, and Karl Pillemer. (2013). Verbal and physical aggression directed at nursing home staff by residents. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 28, 660-667.

Suitor, J. Jill, Megan Gilligan, and Karl Pillemer. (2013). "Continuity and Change in Mothers' Favoritism Toward Offspring in Adulthood." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 75: 1229-1247.

Chen, Emily K., M. C. Reid, and Karl Pillemer. (2013). "Tailoring Evidence-Based Interventions for New Populations: A Model for Program Adaptation through Community Engagement." *Evaluation and the Health Professions*, 36, 73-92.

Pillemer, Karl. (2012). *30 Lessons for Living: Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans*. New York: Viking/Penguin.

Pillemer, Karl, Emily K. Chen, Kimberly S. Van Haitsma, Jeanne Teresi, Mildred Ramirez, Stephanie Silver, Gail Sukha, and Mark S. Lachs. (2012). "Resident-to-Resident Aggression in Nursing Homes: Results from a Qualitative Event Reconstruction Study." *The Gerontologist*, 24: 92-112.

Pillemer, Karl, Rhoda H. Meador, Jeanne A. Teresi, Charles R. Henderson Jr., Emily K. Chen, Mark S. Lachs, Gabriel Boratgis, Stephanie Silver, and Joseph P. Eimicke. (2012). "Effects of Electronic Health Information Technology Implementation on Nursing Home Resident Outcomes." *Journal of Aging and Health*. 24, 92-112.

Pillemer, Karl, Christin L. Munsch, Thomas Fuller-Rowell, Catherine Riffin, J. Jill Suitor. (2012). "Ambivalence toward Adult Children: Differences between Mothers and Fathers." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74, 1101 – 1113.

Pillemer, Karl, J. Jill Suitor, Seth Pardo, and Charles Henderson, Jr. (2010). "Mothers' Differentiation and Depressive Symptoms among Adult Children." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 333-345.

Pillemer, Karl, Thomas E. Fuller-Rowell, Cary Reid, and Nancy Wells. (2010). "Environmental Volunteering and Health Outcomes over a Twenty-Year Period." *The Gerontologist*, 50:594-602.

Pillemer, Karl, Linda P. Wagenet, Debra Goldman, Lori Bushway, Rhoda Meador. (2010). "Environmental Volunteerism in Later Life: Benefits and Barriers." *Generations*, 33, 58-63