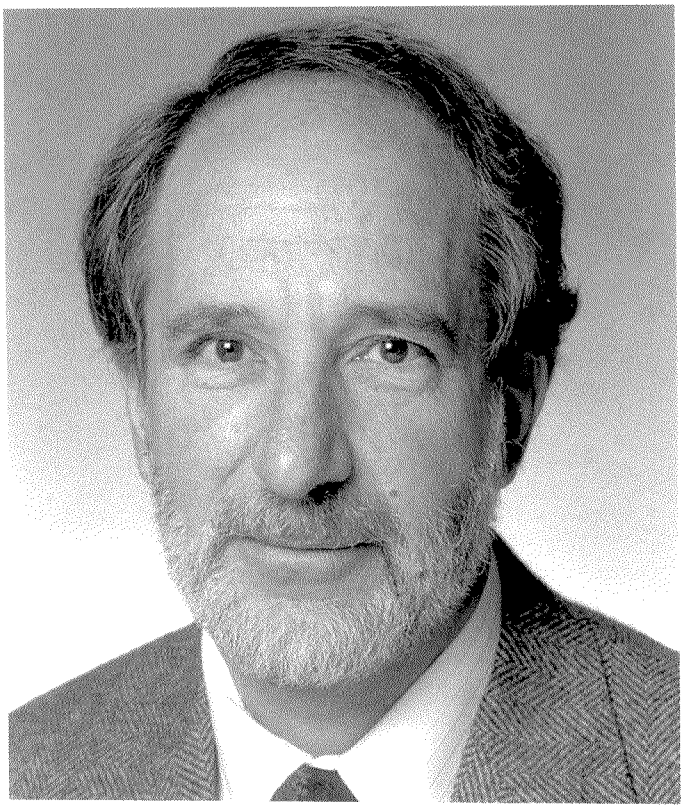
GUEST EDITORIAL

VA Palo Alto Rehabilitation Research and Development Center of Excellence on Mobility

The mission of the VA Palo Alto Center of Excellence on Mobility is to increase the independence and improve the quality of life of veterans with physical disabilities through the development of innovative treatments and devices. Our clinical emphasis is to improve the mobility of veterans and others with neurologic and orthopedic impairments. Most of our work emphasizes the restoration of ambulation. Other work focuses on restoring upper limb mobility (i.e., arm movement and manipulation). Loss of mobility in persons with stroke, spinal cord injury, arthritis, and osteoporosis are targeted.

Our approach is multifaceted and multidisciplinary. Scientists, engineers, and clinicians/surgeons are involved in every project from inception to completion. We believe that this team approach is essential to ensure rapid clinical deployment of the newly developed treatments and devices. The development of clinically relevant scientific foundations utilizing contemporary engineering methodologies form the basis for the translation of these concepts into clinical research projects. Often, our design engineers and craftsmen build apparatus essential to the experiments, or clinical device prototypes. This focus issue on "Mechanobiology" (editor, Dennis Carter, PhD; also Acting Director of the VA Palo Alto Rehab R&D Center) exemplifies our multifaceted and multidisciplinary approach.

Students (pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, medical) are an integral part of the team. Thus, education of a new cadre of investigators working in rehabilitation science and developing new rehabilitation treatments is the cornerstone to our approach. We are fortunate to be affiliated with Stanford University, specifically the Departments of Mechanical Engineering (Biomechanical Engineering Division) in the School of Engineering, and Functional Restoration (Orthopaedic Surgery, Hand Surgery, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Plastic Surgery, and Sports Medicine Divisions) in the School of Medicine. Shared resources (e.g., laboratories, personnel) and interests allow us to achieve more than would otherwise be possible with VA funding alone.



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We are extraordinarily indebted, and owe much gratitude to, the Department of Veterans Affairs, especially the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, for the generous support received over the past 20 years. We invite you to learn more about our Center (http://guide.stanford.edu/).

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