



Getting to Know You: the MADRC *Longitudinal Cohort*

MADRC Longitudinal Cohort

This is the first edition of a newsletter written for the participants in the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (MADRC) "Longitudinal Cohort" study, and your families.

By sending you this newsletter, we hope to provide you with helpful, up-to-date information about brain aging and Alzheimer's Disease.

We know that participating in research requires your time and commitment, and want to let you know how much we appreciate it, and how important this is to our efforts to understand more about memory loss and aging. You are our partners in this research.

Thank you!

The Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center team

Longitudinal means "over a period of time"
Cohort refers to the GROUP selected for study

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON MEMORY & AGING?

Our purpose is to examine changes in memory and cognition (thinking). The study is called "longitudinal" because these changes are measured over a period of time.

We hope to gain a better understanding of the types of changes that come with normal aging, and those which do not.

With this information, we can learn better ways to diagnose, treat, prevent and, even cure such diseases.

IF YOU ARE ALREADY ENROLLED AS A MEMBER OF THE LONGITUDINAL COHORT, you may call **Jeanette Gunther, MS, the clinical coordinator**, if you have any questions or concerns, or just so she can tell you how much we appreciate your partnership in this important research. **You can reach Jeanette at: 617-726-5571.**



**Too Old to Start Medical School?
*NO PROBLEM. YOU'RE A PERFECT AGE TO HELP FIND
THE ANSWERS TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.***

▶ **Research Study for Identifying Early Markers of Alzheimer's Disease**

We are seeking healthy volunteers and individuals with Mild Cognitive Impairment or Mild Alzheimer's Disease, ages 55 to 90 who are interested in taking part in a clinical research study to find out if functional MRI images of the brain can be used to diagnose and monitor the course and treatment of Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and Alzheimer's disease (AD). Subjects must have a study partner and be willing to come to 6 to 8 clinic visits over the course of 2 to 3 years. At each of these visits, subjects will be asked to have blood drawn, undergo tests of memory and have an MRI scan of the brain. Each visit will last between 4 to 5 hours. Study participants will be reimbursed \$50.00 for the completion of each clinic visit and \$50 for each scan, as well as parking expenses. If you are interested, please call 617-726-6212 or email Kelly O'Keefe (kokeefe1@partners.org).

▶ **Study of Antibody Treatment for Alzheimer's Disease**

We are seeking Alzheimer's Disease (AD) patients to evaluate the tolerability and safety of a new investigational drug called AAB-001 that may be a possible treatment for Alzheimer's disease. AAB-001 is an investigational drug not currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Subjects will be randomly assigned to receive drug or placebo (contains no active medication). Subjects must have a study partner or caregiver who is able to come to 11 clinic visits over the course of 16 weeks. Study participants will be reimbursed for parking. If you are interested, call Dr. Gad Marshall at Brigham and Women's Hospital (617) 732-8085, or email gamarshall@partners.org.

ALL INFORMATION IS KEPT COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL.

Web Resource Tip: NIHSeniorHealth.gov

This website is for older adults and features health information from the National Institutes of Health. NIHSeniorHealth makes aging-related health information easily accessible for family members and friends seeking reliable, easy to understand online health information. NIHSeniorHealth features authoritative and up-to-date health information from Institutes and Centers at NIH. In addition, the American Geriatrics Society provides expert and independent review of some of the material found on this web site. Each health topic includes general background information, open-captioned videos, quizzes and frequently asked questions. See also the American Geriatrics Society public education website, www.healthinaging.org

SPOTLIGHT ON ONGOING RESEARCH

African Americans and Alzheimer's Disease: The Silent Epidemic *An interview with Alzheimer's Researcher Dr. Reisa Sperling*

Marcie Freeman, MADRC



F: *Dr. Sperling, the National Alzheimer's Association published a document concluding that Alzheimer's Disease is a serious problem for African Americans. Does Alzheimer's disease affect African Americans differently?*

Dr. S.: Yes. The document reported on findings of recent scientific studies that examined the relationship of race and Alzheimer's disease. The conclusions were so strong the Alzheimer's Association called this disease the "silent epidemic" in the African American community. Alzheimer's disease is more common among African Americans than whites and there is greater risk of the kind of Alzheimer's that runs in families in African-Americans. Genetic and environmental factors may work differently to cause Alzheimer's disease in African Americans.

F: *This sounds like another of the health disparities we hear so much about.*

Dr. S.: Yes, there is also evidence that Alzheimer's disease is often diagnosed at later stages of the disease in African-Americans. As researchers, we want to be sure that research studies are designed to help understand Alzheimer's in African-Americans, and to develop effective treatments for the disease.

F: *How is research increasing the understanding of Alzheimer's and African Americans?*

Dr. S.: Research suggests that vascular disease in African-Americans may be one factor contributing to Alzheimer's disease. African Americans are at very high risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels and adult diabetes. These conditions contribute to vascular disease, and are also risk factors for developing Alzheimer's. There are therapies for preventing vascular disease, such as medications for lowering cholesterol and maintaining healthy blood pressure, so we need to continue to research whether these medications may also protect against Alzheimer's disease.

F: *What is the focus of your own research?*

Dr. S.: My work involves using the latest "imaging" technology, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron emission tomography (PET) scans to recognize changes in the brain that occur **before** there is significant loss of memory, so we can treat people earlier. We are also running clinical trials of promising new medications for Alzheimer's disease, in particular, drugs that may slow the progression of the symptoms.

F: *African-Americans can participate in research studies in order to learn more about how Alzheimer's affects them, correct?*

Dr. S.: Yes. It's important in the effort to increase understanding of how Alzheimer's disease affects African-Americans, in developing more effective treatments, and ultimately, eliminating this disease.

For more information on Dr. Sperling's research studies on Alzheimer's Disease: contact the Brigham & Women's Hospital at 617-732-8085.



**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH CENTER**

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The Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) was established in 1984 with funding from the National Institute on Aging. Now in its 24th year of operation, the ADRC is a multi-institutional consortium of Harvard affiliated facilities, including the Massachusetts General Hospital; the Brigham & Women's Hospital; the Harvard Division on Aging; the Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Each institution supports research in Alzheimer's Disease and has a proven record of excellence. By joining together, we amplify existing research facilities and accelerate the pace of understanding and the treatment of AD.

The staff and programs of the **Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center** and **Massachusetts General Hospital Memory Disorders Unit** are dedicated to research on Alzheimer's disease, and improving the well-being and quality of life of our patients and their families.

**DO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMORY LOSS?
INTRODUCING the Alzheimer's Association, Massachusetts Chapter**
Providing education, care and support

The Alzheimer's Association, Massachusetts Chapter is the state chapter of the National Alzheimer's Association. It provides programs and services for families, patients and caregivers coping with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias.

Helpline: the Helpline is available to families and professionals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can always reach a trained counselor by calling the toll free Helpline at **800-272-3900**. Translation services available in over 100 languages.

Support Groups: Support groups provide a forum for family members and caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease to share feelings, concerns and information, and to support each other in coping with the effects of the disease or a related disorder. 150 support groups throughout Massachusetts.

Educational Materials: over 50 books and brochures available to the public

Alzheimer's Association, Massachusetts Chapter

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