We hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and well in these uncertain times. On behalf of everyone at the Stanford Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center (ADRC), we want to thank you for your continued support, dedication, and participation in our research. We are excited to announce that we have been awarded a $15 million grant from the National Institute on Aging. This award is a 5-year renewal of a $7.3 million grant that was initially awarded to us in 2015, and will allow us to further translate our research into improving the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and care for people with Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Lewy body disease, mild cognitive impairment and related cognitive disorders.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Healthy Brain Aging Study has temporarily suspended all in-person data collection until we receive the proper guidance, permission, and assurance to safely resume. Our clinical team has been conducting portions of our follow-up visits over the phone and via Zoom. As always, your health and safety remain our top priority. We are hopeful that we will be able to resume our in-person research visits within the coming months and we thank you for your patience and willingness to accommodate. The ADRC and Stanford University are working hard to resume in-person research efforts, while maintaining and assuring the health and safety of all participants coming to campus. With over 400 participants recruited and enrolled, we are grateful for your continued support, flexibility, and dedication, especially in these uncertain times. We look forward to seeing you soon.

COVID-19 and dementia in the news

Resources

Stanford Medicine COVID-19 Updates
COVID-19, Alzheimer’s and Dementia: What You Need to Know
COVID-19 presents novel challenges for dementia patients
Why COVID-19 took a devastating toll on people in nursing homes
Yearly visits during COVID-19

For this year’s follow-up visits, we are asking participants if they would be available via phone call or Zoom to complete some questionnaires and some cognitive testing. Please look out for an email and or phone call from our research coordinators (Veronica, T’Lesa, Michele, Maria-Lucia, or Nicole) if you are able and willing to participate this year. As part of a national effort to better serve our participants, we will be contacting you either by phone or email to complete a brief COVID-19 survey. If you have any questions, please contact Christina Wyss-Coray, CWyssCoray@stanfordhealthcare.org or at (650) 721-2409.

The ADRC is composed of 7 different cores (Clinical, Biomarker, Data Management & Statistics, Imaging, Neuropathology, Outreach & Engagement) and one component (Research & Education) that work together to translate our research into further understanding the causes of neurodegenerative diseases and enabling early identification, effective treatment, and prevention. Each issue of our newsletter will highlight one core. This issue features the ‘Clinical Core.’ More details about each core can be found on our website: med.stanford.edu/adrc.html

The clinical core of the ADRC recruits and follows patients with early stage Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and Lewy body disease; older volunteers with mild cognitive impairment; and healthy older controls without neurological disease or cognitive impairment. Composed of clinical research coordinators, neuropsychologists, and behavioral neurologists, the team coordinates and collects data from neurological and neuropsychological assessments, brain imaging, and genetic and molecular markers derived from blood, spinal fluid, skin fibroblasts, and stool which provide crucial information to the other cores of the ADRC. The clinical core is led by Dr. Victor Henderson. The clinical core involves a number of faculty and senior staff, and we will describe their important roles in a future Mind Matters newsletter. Our Research Coordinators are pictured below.
Dr. Henderson directs the Stanford Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC), established in 2015 with principal funding from the National Institutes of Health and recently refunded through 2025. Other support comes from the Department of Neurology. He is a neurologist with subspecialty training in brain–behavior relations and is a member of two departments in the Stanford School of Medicine: Epidemiology & Population Health and Neurology & Neurological Sciences. His research examines factors that contribute to mental (cognitive) loss during aging and Alzheimer’s disease, and on interventions that might help prevent and treat these disorders. Apart from his research within the ADRC, Dr. Henderson works with colleagues at Stanford and other universities on how various other medical conditions can affect the risk of developing dementia, such as hormone changes after menopause, sleep disruption, visual loss, cancer, and heart disease.
Studies directly supported by the ADRC

Healthy Brain Aging Study
Sponsor: National Institute of Health
Study status: Open, enrollment ongoing
Research Coordinator: Christina Wyss-Coray CWyssCoray@stanfordhealthcare.org or 650-721-2409

Pacific Udall Center
Sponsor: NIH/NINDS Morris K. Udall Center of Excellence for Parkinson’s Disease Research
Study status: Open, enrollment ongoing
Research coordinator: Maria-Lucia Campos udallcenter@stanford.edu or 650-721-5274

The ADRC supports internal research in the form of large research projects conducted over a five-year period and two-year developmental projects, with new developmental projects selected each year. The ADRC also supports research by other qualified investigators at Stanford and from other institutions. Center support takes various forms, including de-identified data (clinical, neuropsychological, neuroimaging, genetic, biospecimen, or neuropathological data), tissues and biospecimens, access to well-characterized ADRC participants who have agreed to be contacted, imaging expertise, and biostatistical expertise.

Other studies directed by ADRC-affiliated faculty

The ADRC Supportive Care Study
In an effort to better understand how we can provide the best support possible to all our ADRC participants and their families, the ADRC is conducting The ADRC Supportive Care Study. Research shows that regular virtual video visits conducted by trained health professionals to assess pain and other symptoms can greatly increase efficiency of care delivery by providing more convenient and personal care. The ADRC Community Outreach, Recruitment, and Engagement team has designed a study to evaluate the impact of a virtual healthcare visit. Participation in this study involves a series of virtual video calls using Zoom or WebEx and is separate from and in addition to participation in the yearly follow-up visits that are a part of the Healthy Aging Brain Study. For more information about the Supportive Care Study, please email the team at adrc_support@stanford.edu. As always, information about the Healthy Aging Brain Study can be found on our website at: http://med.stanford.edu/adrc.html or you may contact Christina Wyss Coray at 650-721-2409

Tau PET brain imaging in Parkinson’s Disease
Sponsor: NIH/NINDS
Study status: Open, enrollment ongoing
Research coordinator: Marian Shahid mshahid@stanford.edu or 650-723-0060

Parkinson’s Disease Facial Expression Biomarker Study
Sponsor: The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s disease Research
Study status: Open, enrollment ongoing
Research coordinator: Kristen Wheeler kjwheele@stanford.edu or 650-269-0484

Iron as an Imaging Biomarker for Inflammation in Alzheimer’s Disease
Sponsor: NIH, GE Healthcare
Study status: Open, enrollment ongoing
Research coordinator: Nicole Mouchawar nmouchaw@stanford.edu or 650-260-3026