

Groundbreaking study on the progression of Alzheimer's disease needs participants

January 7 2011, By Erin White

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine is enrolling participants for the first national study to detect Alzheimer's disease in older people before they begin to have significant memory loss.

Researchers will use imaging techniques and biomarker measures in blood and cerebrospinal fluid specially developed to track changes in the living brain. The goal is to identify who is at risk for Alzheimer's, track progression of the disease and devise tests to measure the effectiveness of potential interventions.

Northwestern Medicine's Cognitive Neurology and [Alzheimer's Disease Center \(CNADC\)](#) is one of several study sites led by the National Institute on Aging. The study is an expansion of the National Institutes of Health's Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative.

"This is an important study to develop ways physicians can detect the disease before the person has overt memory loss," said Diana Kerwin, the principal investigator of the study at CNADC and assistant professor of geriatrics at Feinberg. "The earlier we can detect disease the better chance there is to prevent or delay the memory loss from happening at all. Early diagnosis is really going to be key as far as making any further breakthroughs into the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and other memory disorders."

Potential [participants](#) include men and women aged 55 to 90 with early signs of [memory loss](#) that does not currently affect their daily lives.

Participants without signs of cognitive problems also can enroll in the control group of the study.

“By taking part in the study, someone who has Alzheimer’s disease in their family or is concerned about their own memory would be contributing to our scientific understanding of the early markers of Alzheimer’s disease pathology in the brain and also normal aging,” Kerwin said.

Another important aspect of the study is the sharing of data soon after it is obtained. Imaging data is posted to a publicly accessible database available to qualified researchers worldwide.

More information: To find out more about this study contact Kristine Lipowski, the study’s project coordinator, at: (312) 503-2486.

Provided by Northwestern University

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