

Regenstrief extending successful aging brain care model globally

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The resources developed for an innovative collaborative model of dementia care, which reduces emergency room and hospital visits and improves the quality of care for those with dementia, are now available to institutions, clinicians and caregivers around the globe with the establishment of the Aging Brain Care Program. The ABC Program is the first initiative of the new Senior Health Implementation Center at the Regenstrief Institute.

Through its ABC Program, the Senior Health Implementation Center will disseminate ABC tools including a how-to manual for clinicians, a dementia symptoms monitor and resource handbook for caregivers, as well as providing onsite training. The new center and its initial program will be announced at the May 2 to 5 annual meeting of the American Geriatrics Society. The center is supported by a grant from the Regenstrief Foundation.

Developed by researchers from the Regenstrief Institute and the Indiana University School of Medicine and operational for the past four years at the Healthy [Aging Brain](#) Center at Wishard Health Services, the ABC model of [dementia care](#) extends the definition of patient to include family members who enable cognitively impaired individuals to live in the community. Physicians, nurses, social workers and other staff members work closely with both the older adult and family caregivers in the exam room and in the home as well as over the phone and via email, to deliver care to improve both mental and physical health.

"We have successfully translated the collaborative memory care approach we developed into actual practice," said Regenstrief investigator Malaz Boustani, M.D., MPH, associate professor of medicine at the IU School of Medicine. "In addition to the obvious health benefits of fewer ER visits and hospitalizations, there is less emotional and financial burden on the individual and family members, as well as the system paying for health care."

Patients treated using the ABC model at Wishard's Healthy Aging Brain Center have fewer behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia after one year than they did at onset of treatment, according to Dr. Boustani, the center's medical and research director.

A 2006 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* led by Regenstrief investigator Christopher Callahan, M.D., Cornelius and Yvonne Pettinga Professor in Aging Research at the IU School of Medicine, reported the results of the clinical trial of the ABC model.

A 2011 study published in *Aging & Mental Health* by Dr. Boustani and colleagues found that within a year of an initial visit to the HABC at Wishard, the rates of emergency room and hospital visits per patient were reduced by more than 45 percent. For those who were hospitalized, ABC patients had an average inpatient stay of five days in contrast to the average inpatient stay of seven days for non-ABC patients.

"All these numbers have caught the attention of those who care for older adults," said Stephanie L. Munger, MPH, the certified health education specialist who manages the new center. "Over the past year we have fielded numerous inquiries about how we are successfully improving the health and well-being of those who are cognitively impaired. We have had visitors from as far away as Germany come to learn about what we are doing."

"With the ABC Program we will be working to help change how memory problems are treated wherever the patient may be."

Dr. Callahan is the founding director of the IU Center for Aging Research, of which Dr. Boustani is associate director. Both are geriatricians.

Provided by Indiana University

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