

Paul Aisen, M.D., Named to Faculty of UCSD Department of Neurosciences and as New Director of the Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study

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Paul Aisen, M.D.

A leading researcher in Alzheimer's disease clinical trials, Paul Aisen, M.D., has joined the faculty of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine's Department of Neurosciences. He has also been named director of the Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study (ADCS), a position he has held on an interim basis since the death of longtime director Leon Thal in a plane crash in February 2007. Prior to that, Aisen was associate director of the ADCS and professor in the Department of Neurology at Georgetown University Medical Center.

"The Department of Neurosciences at UCSD is extremely fortunate to have recruited Dr. Aisen here," said Doris Trauner, M.D., interim chair of the department. "He is viewed as one of the leading clinical trials research scientists in the field of Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Aisen has made substantial contributions in this area already, and I am confident that he will continue to provide strong leadership in his role here as director of the ADCS."

"My efforts will be directed toward the continued success and growth of ADCS, as well as development of better therapies for Alzheimer's disease," said Aisen. "UCSD and San Diego represent an unparalleled environment for translational neuroscience research, and I think that we are now on the brink of major developments in therapy for Alzheimer's."

Aisen's appointment as director of the ADCS was made by the National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health. In 2006, the NIA announced \$52 million in funding over six years to the ADCS to conduct several new clinical trials on Alzheimer's disease. The award was the third renewal of a cooperative agreement between the NIA and UC San Diego, which coordinates the consortium of more than 75 research sites in the United States and Canada.

The ADCS was founded in 1991 in response to a need to advance research in the development of drugs that might be useful for treating patients with Alzheimer's disease, particularly drugs that might not be developed by industry.

The first drug to treat Alzheimer's disease came out in 1993. Since then, drugs have been developed that offer some symptomatic relief, but have no impact on the disease process itself or the progression of the disease, according to Aisen. "But we are very close," he said. "Current studies, such as those involving anti-amyloid treatments, show terrific promise in the next stage of disease-modifying treatment."

Aisen added, "Alzheimer's is among our greatest health care problems; we have made huge progress in understanding the disease, and have identified the pivotal molecules that cause it. Therefore we will learn how to control the disease in the relatively near future."

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