

National Brain Imaging Study On Alzheimer's Disease Underway at UCSD Shiley-Marcos Center

Study is Largest, Most Comprehensive of Its Kind

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UCSD Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center will be part of the five-year, \$60 million Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI), a landmark research study to identify brain and other biological changes associated with memory decline, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced today.

The project was begun by the National Institute on Aging at the NIH and is supported by more than a dozen other federal agencies and private-sector companies and organizations, making it the largest public-private partnership on brain research underway at the NIH. Investigators at 58 sites across the United States and Canada are involved with the study, which is being led by Dr. Leon Thal, chair of the UCSD Department of Neurosciences and director of UCSD's Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center; Dr. Michael Weiner, San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the University of California, San Francisco; and Dr. Ronald Petersen, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota. The goal of the initiative is to speed up the search for treatments and cures for Alzheimer's disease by seeing whether imaging of the brain - through magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or positron emission tomography (PET) scans conducted every six months - can help predict and monitor the onset and progression of Alzheimer's. In addition, samples of blood and, for some participants, cerebral spinal fluid will be collected and tested to determine if these biomarkers can predict and monitor the disease. It is hoped that imaging techniques and biomarkers will prove useful in testing the effectiveness of new therapies in slowing the progression of Alzheimer's or preventing the disease altogether.

The NIH is seeking 800 men and women between the ages of 55 and 90 to participate in the ADNI study. Researchers are looking for people who are in good general health with no memory problems, or are in good general health but have memory problems or concerns, or have a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment or early Alzheimer's disease.

Patients seeking more information about the study in the San Diego area should contact the Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at 858-622-5800; the NIA's Alzheimer's Disease Education & Referral Center at 800-438-4380 or visit www.alzheimers.org/imagine. Spanish-language capabilities are available at some of the study sites.

Alzheimer's disease affects one in 10 Americans over the age of 65. By the year 2050, 13 million Americans may suffer from the disease.

A special aspect of this project is the support of Maya Angelou, the eminent poet, author, educator and historian. Angelou, a professor at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., is working with the researchers to ask the public to take part in the study. She will support the national ADNI recruitment outreach campaign, "Imagine Stopping the Progression of Alzheimer's Disease," by appearing in radio and print public service announcements. Angelou has a number of friends who have suffered the effects of Alzheimer's.

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