The Newsletter is Back!

The Stanford/VA Alzheimer’s Research Center Newsletter has returned!

We will be publishing the most recent news about Alzheimer’s disease here. You will also find out about our Center’s current and new research projects, as well as how you can be involved and lots more.

Reader’s Corner

This newsletter is for you. We will provide updates on research here at the Stanford/VA Alzheimer’s Center, at ARCCs around California, and around the world. We also want to hear from you. What interests you? Features you would like to read about? Specific research findings? Also, perhaps you have a brief story you can share about your experiences as a patient or caregiver? Or possibly a helpful tip for others?

If you want to contribute, contact us by email at VLDAO@stanford.edu. You will see your contributions in upcoming issues in the “Reader’s Corner” column.

As you all know, these are challenging times. Major concerns face us from nearly every direction, including our health, and these multiple priorities need to be balanced. Like you, we will be watching how all of this will affect our Center. Our support comes from a mix of State, Federal, and private donors and each of these is feeling the same financial concerns as we are. We will be calling on some of you to help us keep our State legislators and administrators informed on the importance of funding for Alzheimer’s research and services, even in these lean times.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for helping us in our efforts to further the understanding and treatment of Alzheimer’s disease.

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An Introduction to Our Center...

The Stanford/VA Alzheimer’s Research Center of California (ARCC) has been an active leader in Alzheimer’s disease (AD) research and diagnosis for 25 years. Our Center is one of ten centers in California that provide information, referral services, and comprehensive assessments of individuals with memory problems. These include neurological, psychiatric and psychological evaluations, as well as care planning conferences for families and caregivers. The ARCCs serve Californians by providing diagnosis and treatment to persons (both patients and family members) affected by Alzheimer’s disease and other dementing illnesses. The Centers provide a high level of expertise in multiple health care disciplines; they particularly serve people with difficult to diagnose conditions. The Centers function as a connected program to translate new diagnostic and treatment advances into practice and to extend them to the community with the aim of improving the quality, efficacy, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of dementia care in California with the goal of ultimately reducing the impact of dementing disease on California and its residents.

Services and Activities

Our Center provides a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation by a multidisciplinary clinical team. The evaluation includes:

- Evaluation and diagnosis of memory problems
- Family conferences following the evaluation, to review results and to discuss recommendations for care
- Reports to private physicians, when requested
- Support groups and patient/family education (All participants may attend support groups and classes for caregivers)
- Our staff is available for consultation and support through the course of the illness

Referral/Eligibility

People with any symptoms of memory loss may be referred by self, their family, community agency or personal physician. The Center is not limited to Alzheimer’s disease; any individual whose primary problems may result from a dementia can be seen. Individuals continue to see their private physician for primary care. Veterans and non-veterans are welcome. For more information about scheduling an appointment, please contact Reena Rao at (650) 493-5000 ext. 67729.
Research Updates

Publications are available for download at our Center's website at [http://arcc.stanford.edu](http://arcc.stanford.edu)

Your participation in our ongoing research projects is greatly appreciated. Information you provide is analyzed and ultimately published in peer-reviewed journals to help advance findings in the field. Below are updates on some of the studies we are currently conducting.

**Sexuality In Alzheimer’s Disease**

The Sexuality Study evaluates the impact of Alzheimer’s Disease on physical and emotional intimacy in marital relationships. This study will help us gain a better understanding of these issues and help couples that are affected by Alzheimer’s Disease cope with them better. A manuscript entitled, “Preliminary Investigation of Satisfaction with Intimacy among Dementia Patients and Their Partners” has been submitted to the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and is currently in the review process. This paper examines characteristics of Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) patients and their partners who report satisfaction with intimacy.

**Psychosocial Factors in Alzheimer’s Disease Progression**

Enrollment for the Psychosocial Factors in AD Progression study is open. This multi-center study evaluates whether non-drug interventions, such as participation in support groups, can make a significant difference in Alzheimer’s Disease. This study will help health care providers make better recommendations, inform policy-makers on how to better allocate funds, and help patients and their families choose resources. Patients currently enrolled will continue to be followed for up to 2.5 years. Preliminary data analysis will focus on examining the prevalence of support group, day care, and other service use among AD patients and their caregivers. Analysis will also examine whether regular participation in these programs slows the rate of cognitive decline and delays institutionalization in individuals with AD.

**Dementia and Mild Memory Impairment Focus Group Study**

Four focus groups were conducted over the last year to explore the impact of Dementia and Mild Memory Impairment (MMI) on marital intimacy and sexuality. The information provided has been analyzed and we are currently in the process of preparing a manuscript for submission to International Psychogeriatrics this summer.

**Medication Assessment in Alzheimer’s Disease and Mild Cognitive Impairment Patients**

This is a study evaluating the effectiveness of routine clinical treatment of individuals with Alzheimer’s or Mild Cognitive Impairment. Included will be individuals treated with FDA-approved drugs such as Aricept, Exelon, Reminyl, and Namenda, as well as those who are not receiving these medications. This collaborative project continues the reassessments of California Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) and Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) patients so that the long-term clinical impact of FDA approved anti-Alzheimer disease medications can be determined on AD and MCI patients who are not rigorously selected for FDA type trials, but instead are more representative of ordinary clinical practice in California. Dr. Tinklenberg presented preliminary findings at the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology Annual Meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona on December 8, 2008. His poster, “Donepezil Treatment and Alzheimer’s disease: A comparison of California and Nordic data,” is located on the wall just across from our waiting room, and can be viewed during your next visit to our Center.
There are issues unique to individuals with memory changes and to their family members. We are trying to learn how to better address these issues by developing new services and providing support groups that meet the needs of individuals with memory problems and their families. We are involved in ongoing development of support groups to achieve these goals. Currently, the following groups are available at our center:

**Caregivers Support Group**

This is a small group designed to provide educational information and answers to individual questions and concerns of caregivers. It also provides a network to offer support and guidance. Since this is a small group we do request regular attendance to the meetings. The group meets on the second Friday of each month from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Mild Cognitive Impairment Group**

This group is for individuals with a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment (symptoms not meeting criteria for dementia) and their family members or friends. The main focus is on education, communication, management, and psychosocial concerns. The MCI group meetings are divided into two groups; one group meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and other on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, both from 11:00 am to 12:30.

All groups meet at the Palo Alto VA Health Care System:

3801 Miranda Ave., Bldg. 6, 2nd floor Conference Room (Room C258)

For further information, please contact Helen Davies, MS, APRN, BC at (650) 858-3915.

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**STANFORD/VA ALZHEIMER’S RESEARCH CENTER SUPPORT GROUPS**

The Center provides interesting research opportunities for patients registered and evaluated here. Here are some of our current research studies:

**EXERCISE AND ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE**

This study evaluates whether patients who engage in exercise and socially and mentally stimulating activities have less depression and slower decline in functional status.

**LONGITUDINAL SLEEP STUDY**

This observational study is designed to look at sleep/wake patterns in persons with memory problems over the course of time. This study will collect a one week record of your sleep once a year, and will be conducted in your home. No treatment is involved. (To sign up for this study, contact Deryl Wicks at (650) 493-5000 ext. 64052)

**HEALTH ECONOMICS, UTILITIES AND HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE OF CALIFORNIANS WITH ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE**

The purpose of this collaborative study is to obtain resource use, health utilities and health-related quality of life assessments in patients with Alzheimer’s disease and mild cognitive impairment; and to improve methods for assessment of effectiveness of interventions for patients with AD.

For more information about our research studies, please contact us at (650) 493-5000 ext. 67729.
Help make a difference!

Donations and gifts to our center enable us to continue research for the causes and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Your generous contributions are important in supporting our efforts to provide high quality care to our patients and in understanding and treating Alzheimer's disease.

Contributions can be made by check or online and are tax-deductible.

To make a donation by check, please follow the instructions below:

Make check payable to: Stanford/VA ARCC
Mail check to: Pauline Luu (116F)
c/o Jared Tinklenberg, M.D.
Stanford/VA Alzheimer's Disease Research Center of California
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

To make an online donation, please visit: http://arcc.stanford.edu/donation.html

We wish to thank all the patients and caregivers who have donated their time and effort to our research.

Stanford/VA Alzheimer’s Research Center of California

Contact us at:
VA Palo Alto Health Care System
3801 Miranda Avenue
Mail Code: 116F-PAD
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Direct Line: (650) 858-3915
Fax: (650) 849-0183

Contributers:
Virginia Dao, Yvonne Ramirez, Lori Newkirk

Director/Co-director:
Jerry Tinklenberg, MD
Helen D. Davies, MS, APRN, BC

Who do I call for information?

General information
Reena Rao
Clinical Research Coordinator
(650) 493-5000, ext. 67729
reena.rao@stanford.edu

Support Groups
Virginia Dao
Clinical Research Coordinator
(650) 493-5000, ext. 66121
vldao@stanford.edu

Website: http://arcc.stanford.edu