



Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Newsletter

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**You can help researchers from the comfort of your home!
New nationwide study on Home-Based Assessments for
memory protection research beginning at Mount Sinai.**

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The Mount Sinai ADRC proudly announces the initiation of a nationwide study designed to learn how to assess older volunteers from the comfort of their home. The pilot study that was used to develop this project was completed by Mount Sinai to demonstrate the ability to collect important information without the inconvenience of time consuming visits to a clinic. We are conducting the Home Based Assessment study to determine if methods such as a telephone, a computer kiosk or mail-in forms are better ways to assess changes, and offer research opportunities to those who may be less able to travel.

The Home-Based Assessment study will evaluate these three in-home types of information gathering and determine how practical each method is. Second, it will determine

if these three methods of gathering information can detect a change and a rate of change in both the volunteers' daily living activities and their capabilities over time. The final analysis will compare these methods to traditional ways of collecting information at a doctor's office.

You may be eligible to participate if you:

- *Have normal mental function.*
- *Are age 75 or older.*
- *Are fluent in English.*
- *Able to live independently.*
- *Are willing to take multi-vitamins provided by the study.*
- *Are able to answer and dial a telephone, have access to secure mail, and possess minimal computer skills or a willingness to learn.*
- To learn more, call Jessica Egan at **212-241-8329**.

**Save the Date! Friday
March 21st, 2008**

- Join us 3/21/07 for a "thank you" party for our research volunteers and their families. Hear about study results. Join us for snacks, fun, and research updates. Invites coming soon!

**Ask The Expert: Corbett Schimming, M.D.,
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, ADRC.**

Q: I've been hearing about new treatments for Alzheimer's like a patch and a vaccine? Are these available yet? Are they effective and safe?

R: Yes, there are many exciting developments on the horizon as we investigate new ways of fighting Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's is a chronic disease which attacks the very substance of patients' identities—their memories. Over time, it robs patients of not only their memories, but also the means of expressing themselves, understanding others and the reasoning abilities needed to live independently. In the case of the patch and vaccine, these are two different ways of combating Alzheimer's—by providing new ways of helping patients take medications already known to help (in the former) and by using our immune systems to prevent or reverse the disease process itself (in the latter).



*(Continued
on page 4)*

ADRC News



Fall Memory Walk A Success!

NYCARE (the ADRC's of Mount Sinai, Columbia and NYU and the Alzheimer's Association) raised over \$7,000 for the local Alzheimer's Association. Congratulations to our star fund raiser, Wendy Samuels, who raised over \$5,000!

Pictured above: Wendy Samuels, Brinton Parsons, and Dr. Mary Sano.

Pictured above right: Katya Gaynor, a Mount Sinai research coordinator, who ran our raffle and information table. Congratulations to Mr. August C. of Manhattan, who won a \$50 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble.



Left: Ann and Jeffrey Mann.

There were clear skies and plenty of sunshine at the Mann Foundation's 3rd Annual Golf & Tennis Outing which took place at Glen Head Country Club in Glen Head, Long Island. Honorees at the event were Barry and Richard Kringstein of Herman Kay for the Apparel category; Allen Flicker of International Lights Inc. for the Real Estate category; and Howard Altman of Rothstein Kass for the Wall Street & Financial category.

Over 150 guests attended the sold out golf event, and guests also enjoyed tennis matches and games of Texas Hold'em. Cocktails and dinner followed the fun in the sun, as well as awarding prizes

to the best players of the day. This event benefits Mount Sinai's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC).

ADRC NEWS



Above: A recent photograph of many ADRC faculty and staff, including Dr. Mary Sano, center, front row.

We could not run the ADRC without the energetic and creative dedication of our research assistants. This month, a special thank you goes out to George Marzloff, who joined the ADRC in July (pictured above, back row, dark blue shirt). A recent graduate from MIT, with a major in Brain and Cognitive Sciences, George has been recruiting for several ADRC studies. Additionally, George has been the “go to” man for everything from computer problems to moving heavy file cabinets! However, this month he took it upon himself to create a scoring program to enable us quickly and reliably to score the neuropsychological tests we administer to everyone as part of the Uniform Data Set (UDS). The ADRC is currently testing out this new program, with the hope of eventually sharing it with other centers across the country.

WE MISS YOU!
IS IT TIME FOR YOUR CHECK-UP? WE URGE ALL ADRC VOLUNTEERS TO HAVE ANNUAL MEMORY TESTING SCHEDULED AT YOUR CONVENIENCE. PLEASE CALL 212-241-8329 TODAY FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT.

Cont'd from page 1: Ask the doc....

The Exelon “patch” (rivastigmine transdermal) is a new way of delivering an older type of medication, the cholinesterase inhibitor. This class of medications helps raise the levels of acetylcholine in the brain, a chemical which has been found to be depleted in patients with AD. For many patients, these medications help delay the worsening of their memory. However, for patients who cannot take pills by mouth or cannot tolerate certain gastrointestinal side effects of these drugs, the patch offers a way around these problems. The patch is applied to the skin once a day, bypassing the digestive system and going straight into the bloodstream. This may prevent the nausea and vomiting sometimes associated with the pill form, and also eliminates the need for multiple doses. This may be a significant advantage for forgetful patients. In addition, studies showed the patch to be very well-tolerated, with a low risk of skin irritation, lower rates of nausea and vomiting and good adhesion to the skin in a range of conditions such as bathing or warm weather. Overall, the Exelon patch is an added way to deliver medication that offers welcome new choices.

Although medications like the patch may be helpful, they can only ameliorate the symptoms of AD. However, therapies such as the vaccine have the potential to modify the disease process. Unfortunately, an early attempt to develop a vaccine for AD resulted in unsafe side effects. However, follow-up studies of these patients indicated that such treatments likely had long-term benefits on memory and day-to-day functioning. Several studies are now underway to help our immune systems fight AD. They hold the potential to selectively and safely attack the plaques that clog the brain in AD, hopefully removing and perhaps preventing the accumulation of these sticky proteins. Here at Sinai, we hope to start recruiting patients soon to study these new therapies, staying on the cutting edge of the understanding and treatment of AD.

Upcoming Events

February 1, 2008: The ADRC will sponsor a CME program entitled “**First Annual Update on Treatment and Research Advances in Mild Cognitive Impairment and Alzheimer’s Disease.**” This half day program will provide a comprehensive update for community primary care physicians, neurologists, psychiatrists, and nurse practitioners on new treatment approaches and research advances for patients with MCI and AD. The program will cover diagnosis, neuropsychological evaluation, treatment, research initiatives, prevention, new medications in development, and caregiving. For more info, please call Dr. Sewell at 212-241-0188.

What is The MAC?

The ADRC’s **Memory and Aging Center (MAC)** provides comprehensive evaluation, treatment, and management for those who have memory complaints.

Experts: Our team includes experts in geriatrics, geriatric psychiatry and neuropsychology, neurology, and radiology.

Quick: The evaluation can be completed in one visit, including evaluation by a geriatric memory specialist, neuropsychological testing, and neuroimaging.

Consistent: Patients see the same clinicians each time, and may choose to be followed on a yearly basis or have their report sent to their primary physician.

To make an appointment please call our coordinator, at 212-241-1844.



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ADRC Studies: Current and Upcoming

Trial of a Nutritional Supplement in Alzheimer's Disease:

We are seeking patients with Alzheimer's disease to participate in a research study on an antioxidant formula containing **resveratrol**. Some study participants will receive the formula and some will receive a placebo (sugar pill). Participation in the study includes memory testing, neurological exams and blood tests. Resveratrol may reduce brain cell damage caused by harmful chemical byproducts. This study is investigating if resveratrol can help the cognition of Alzheimer's disease patients. The study will be conducted over 12 months and is funded by the Alzheimer's Association. For more information, please call **212-241-8329**. *GCO# 05-1394(0001); Principal Investigator: Mary Sano, Ph.D. MSSM approved through 4/30/08.*

The Development of NIC5-15 in the Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease

We are seeking patients with Alzheimer's disease to participate in this randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of a **dietary supplement**. This supplement has anti-diabetic effects in people and has been shown to improve memory in laboratory animals. It also reduces the production of amyloid in test-tube conditions. Amyloid is the major ingredient of the Alzheimer's plaques. The purpose of the study is to determine whether this product is safe and effective in treating Alzheimer's disease and what dose is best. This natural product (called **NIC5-15**) is found in many foods, including soy beans, and has been already approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as a dietary supplement. For more information, please call **212-241-8329**. *GCO # 05-0090 (0001 01); Hillel Grossman, M.D., Principal Investigator, MSSM IRB approved through 12/19/08.*

A Home-Based Assessment (HBA) study for Memory Protection Research

We are seeking healthy volunteers, 75 or older, to participate in a nationwide research study to examine **methods to evaluate memory and thinking skills from the home**. Currently, in order to participate in Alzheimer's Disease research studies, volunteers must visit a clinic to meet with researchers. The Home-Based Assessment study will look at three types of home evaluation methods — a telephone, electronic kiosk or mail-in forms — to determine if there may be a better way to gather study information and track memory and thinking-related changes over time. Participants will be assigned by chance to one of the three methods and their memory and thinking skills will be evaluated using their particular method monthly, quarterly or annually. Participants will also have an in-person screening evaluation visit that will include a physical and neurological exam, a medical history, and some cognitive testing. Participants will also be given a multi-vitamin to be taken twice daily, as the study will examine how well the different methods report pill-taking behavior. At the end of the 4-year study, participants will undergo a final in-person evaluation. For more information, please contact Jessica Egan at **212-241-8329**. *GCO#91-208 (13); Jane Martin PhD, Principal Investigator, MSSM IRB approved through 08/31/08.*

Note:
Spanish-speaking participants are welcome in all studies. All study participants receive reimbursement for any related expenses. Participants without AD receive monetary compensation for their time.

Age at Onset and Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Very Late Onset AD:

The overall aims of this project are to examine the role of cardiovascular risk factors for cognitive decline and AD in elderly men. A growing body of evidence indicates that risk factors for cardiovascular disease also increase the risk of developing both vascular dementia and AD. Most, but not all, of the evidence comes from research that has studied predominantly women, especially among the very old. In this project, we will conduct an extensive CvRF assessment in an elderly male veteran sample. Male veterans, 75 years old and older with no memory problems and no history of stroke (TIA and mini-strokes are acceptable) may qualify to participate in this research study which consists of a comprehensive interview including memory and thinking tasks, health and medical histories and a blood draw (approximately 3 tablespoons). We will also look to follow-up every year. For more information call **718-367-5727**. *GCO#79-141, Project 4, Principal Investigator: Jeremy Silverman, Ph.D., IRB approved through 3/31/08.*

Brain Tissue Donation Program

The goal of this program is to improve existing treatments and to develop new treatments for AD, which is not possible without the generosity and altruism of individuals who partner with Mount Sinai by participating in our brain donation program. Therefore, men and women, with and without memory impairment are eligible to provide their "intent" to consent for this program. There are several benefits to participation and we have specially trained staff available to discuss these benefits, the donation process, and any related concerns that you and your family might have. For more information, please contact Dr. Karen Dahlman at **212-241-2968**. *GCO #84-119 and #79-141, Principal Investigator: Dr. Vahram Haroutunian, MSSM IRB approved through 3/31/08.*



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Meet our researchers: An interview with Sam Gandy, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Director of the ADRC.

By Margaret C. Sewell, Ph.D.

Sam Gandy, M.D., Ph.D., has his work cut out for him! He is now Mount Sinai Professor of Alzheimer's Research, Associate Director of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry and Chair, National Medical and Scientific Advisory Council of the Alzheimer's Association. We took a moment to catch up with him since he joined the ADRC in July.

Dr. Sewell: Sam, what brought you to Mount Sinai?

Dr. Gandy: Mount Sinai was a natural move for me because I have more existing and natural collaborators here than at any other single institution in the world.

Dr. Sewell: People from the ADRC?

Dr. Gandy: Yes. I've been working on amyloid lowering drugs for over 20 years, using strategies related to neurotransmission, hormones, diet, and lifestyle. My original work was with Joe Buxbaum (ADRC faculty) and since that time I have forged important collaborations not only with Joe but with Giulio Pasinetti and Patrick Hof (both ADRC scientists). My long-standing interest in hormones and aging dovetails with John Morrison's program.

Dr. Sewell: What else will you be doing at Sinai?

Dr. Gandy: Together with Dr. Michelle Erlich, Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology, we are developing and characterizing several new models of neurological disease including Alzheimer's, Huntington's, and dystonia. Bringing these new models into the Mount Sinai community provides exciting new ways to approach these diseases, and important collaborations with those in the Departments of Psychiatry, Neurology, and Genetics.

Dr. Sewell: Sam, we're so happy to have you in the ADRC.

Dr. Gandy: Thank you—I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to be located in proximity to so many close friends and colleagues.

Dr. Gandy's background:

Dr. Gandy is an international expert in the metabolism of the sticky substance called amyloid that clogs the brain in patients with Alzheimer's. In 1989, Gandy and his team discovered the first drugs that could lower formation of amyloid. Dr. Gandy has written more than 150 original papers, chapters and reviews on this topic. In work that is being prepared for publication and that forms the basis for his nomination to the Cure Alzheimer's Fund



Research Consortium, Dr. Gandy and his colleague, Dr. Michelle Ehrlich have created a highly novel transgenic mouse that accumulates amyloid beta oligomers in the brain and develops memory problems but never develops amyloid "plaques" during its entire lifetime. *Dr. Gandy received his M.D. and Ph.D. at the Medical University of South Carolina. He did his postgraduate work at the Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons and Cornell University Medical College. Dr. Gandy completed his post doctorate at The Rockefeller University, where he was appointed assistant professor in the laboratory of Paul Greengard, 2000 Laureate of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Gandy was appointed associate professor of neurology and neurosciences at Cornell University Medical College in 1992. In 1997, he moved to New York University where he served as professor of psychiatry and cell biology until his appointment as Paul C. Brucker, M.D., Professor of Neuroscience at Jefferson Medical College and Director of the Farber Institute for Neurosciences in 2001. In July, 2007, he assumed his current post as Sinai Professor of Alzheimer's Disease Research at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine.*