

ACT

SPRING – 2021 NEWSLETTER

NEW NIA GRANT OF OVER \$55 MILLION AWARDED TO YOUR ACT STUDY!

Here at Kaiser Permanente WA Health Research Institute (KPWHRI), we are not only celebrating the arrival of Spring, but also the news that the National Institute on Aging (NIA) has renewed another five years of funding for the ACT study with a budget of \$55.6 million! We will now be able to expand our Alzheimer's research footprint to more than three times the size of our current operations. This new award reflects the tremendous support and participation from dedicated members, volunteers, and an evidence-based health care system.

Over these last thirty-plus years, the ACT study has enrolled and followed nearly 5,800 older adults to date, who have received health care from our integrated delivery system. Access to participants' medical histories in this system has helped us isolate risk factors for Alzheimer's and other dementias. We have identified numerous factors that affect brain aging with the aim of developing better ways to prevent and treat all forms of dementias, Alzheimer's being the most common. Over time, we've developed a unique longitudinal data repository from aging persons and their brains in a community setting. Researchers from around the globe utilize these invaluable resources to study the aging brain!

In recognition of ACT's growth and increasing value, program officials at NIA suggested we apply for a larger grant this time to bring the study to the leading edge of modern science. We will be drawing on techniques of social science, epidemiology, modern computational methods, and biology, in addition to the amazing advances in neuroscience. We will be studying measured physical activity and sleep, subtypes of Alzheimer's disease, as well as mechanisms in nerve cells, which will help us to understand how commonly used drugs affect a person's risk of dementia.

The new ACT study grant will also allow us to increase our study population. ACT frontline staff--from both KPWHRI and the University of Washington--will expand the existing group of 2,000 active subjects to 3,000, along with efforts to attract a more diverse population.

Additionally, 41 faculty members from ten research institutions, including KPWHRI, UW, Swedish Medical Center and seven major universities outside of Seattle, will contribute to our research. Andrea LaCroix, Professor and Chief of Epidemiology at UCSD, will join current ACT Principal Investigators Eric Larson and Paul Crane in leading the study. Dr. LaCroix was involved with ACT in its early days when she was a researcher at Group Health's Center for Health Studies.

With this generous new funding award, we will deepen our understanding of brain aging and continue our mission to find ways to improve quality of life for the growing numbers of people living to advanced old age. As we celebrate this wonderful news, we thank you--our participants--and all of the faculty and staff who have worked on this project since our very first grant was awarded in 1986! We look forward to future ACT newsletters in which we'll share news of further discoveries—all of which are made possible by you. Stay tuned!

JUST FOR FUN:

Q: What do you call a bee that can't make up its mind?

A: A maybe

Send comments or suggestions to:

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