

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska

IMAGING OF BRAIN SYNAPSES COULD BE NOVEL TEST FOR ALZHEIMER'S



For the first time, researchers have used brain imaging to measure synaptic loss in the brains of living people, perhaps providing a new way to study Alzheimer's disease. Synaptic loss has been associated with cognitive impairment in Alzheimer's disease

In an exploratory study, researchers at Yale University and the Yale Alzheimer's Disease Research Center used brain neuroimaging with positron emission tomography (PET), to measure a specific protein, SV2A,

found in synaptic terminals.

Neurotransmitter chemicals released from synaptic terminals of one brain neuron, cross a narrow gap (the synapse), and cause the adjacent neuron to turn on or off. Levels of SV2A protein should reflect the density of synapses; however, until this work, measurements of SV2A or synaptic density were only possible in brains of people after they died.

The study involved 10 participants with either mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or mild Alzheimer's disease who were compared with 11 participants who were cognitively unimpaired (average age, 73). The PET scans showed that people with MCI or mild Alzheimer's disease had

significantly less SV2A binding in the hippocampus, indicating a decrease in synaptic density, compared to cognitively normal participants.

The hippocampus is part of the brain essential in forming memories and the location of early damage associated with Alzheimer's disease. The PET scan results also correlated with test scores of episodic memory (memories of recent events), as well as scores on a cognitive test for Alzheimer's disease.

In comparison, some other brain imaging measures, though they detect proteins related to Alzheimer's disease, do not correlate directly with cognitive function.

(Cont.) Page 4

UNIQUE PROTEIN NETWORKS IN BLOOD COULD OFFER NEW WAY TO DETECT DISEASES OF AGING

One of the world's largest study of the proteins in our blood could yield a whole new understanding of how disease impacts the body as we age.

Scientists with the Age Gene/ Environment Susceptibility (AGES) Reykjavik Study – a long-term study of older people in Iceland – have found that specific patterns of circulating proteins in our bloodstreams could be a new way to detect signals of health or disease.

The study by a team of scientists including Dr. Lenore Launer and Dr. Tamara Harris from the NIA Intramural Research Program was published in the journal Science. It is the first to give an overview of how these blood serum proteins connect as

networks, and how these networks interact with previously mapped parts of the human genome and gene expressions on different body tissues.

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Offices & Contact Information

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1750 Abbott Rd. Anchorage, AK 99507 Phone (907) 561-3313 Fax 561-3315

Fairbanks

565 University Ave., Suite 2 Fairbanks, AK 99709 Phone (907) 452-2277 Fax 457-3376

Juneau

3225 Hospital Dr., Juneau, AK, 99801 Phone (907) 586-6044 Fax 586-6084

Mat-Su Valley

Trinity Barn Plaza 10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy., Suite 110 Palmer, AK 99645 Phone (907) 746-3413 Fax 746-3412

Copper River Basin

(907) 822-5620

Statewide

Toll Free within Alaska (800) 478-1080

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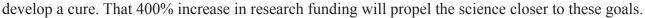


Letter From The Executive Director

Dear Friends,

On September 28, there was good news out of Washington D.C. that went largely unnoticed. The federal appropriations bill that funds the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was signed into law. As a result, biomedical research that is focused on "curing and delaying onset and mitigating symptoms" of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) will jump to \$2.3 billion. That's a 400% increase in just five years.

This increase in NIH funding is critical – for the 5.7 million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease right now, and the 14 million Americans expected to by 2050. Much more research is needed to improve early detection and diagnosis, to develop disease-modifying treatments and to develop a cure. That 400% increase in research funding will propel the se





We are grateful that all members of the Alaska Congressional delegation supported the NIH funding increase. As a result, more research like the imaging study summarized on the first page of this newsletter will be possible.

I recommend to you the article written by Janice Kaiser at page 7. Janice has been writing about her experience as the care partner to her mother who lives with Alzheimer's disease. Many use journaling to explore the emotional landscape of Alzheimer's in daily living. Few have Janice's talent. Her account is illuminating, and her voice is authentic. I was moved by this account.

November is the month designated "Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month" as well as "Family Caregiver Appreciation Month." How appropriate that the two occur at the same time. After all, there are roughly 33,000 family caregivers in Alaska who are supporting an individual living with dementia who need our support too.

Sincerely,

Pamela Kelley
Executive Director

Imaging of brain synapses could be novel test for Alzheimer's

(from page 1)

According to an accompanying editorial by Elizabeth Mormino, Ph.D., from the Stanford Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and William Jagust, M.D., from the University of California, Berkeley, a reliable measure of synaptic density in living people would provide both a better measure of disease progression and could help objectively evaluate treatment response in clinical trials of disease-modifying drugs.

Additionally, the authors note that the method might prove useful not only in Alzheimer's disease, but also other neurodegenerative and psychiatric diseases.

"This is really a breakthrough study," said Eliezer Masliah, M.D., director of NIA's Division of Neuroscience, whose work more than 20 years ago, established a relationship between Alzheimer's symptoms while people were living and the density of synaptic terminals in their brains after they died. "With advances in PET imaging, measuring synaptic density in the brains of living people may provide another

approach to studying Alzheimer's disease."

Reference: Chen MK, et al. Assessing synaptic density in Alzheimer disease with synaptic vesicle glycoprotein 2A positron emission tomographic imaging. JAMA Neurology 2018 July 16. DOI: 10.1001/jamaneurol.2018.1836.

If you're unable to attend our classes, we offer ABC's of Caregiving and other classes as webinars.

See page 9 for a list of current statewide webinars.



Please consider us when you Pick. Click. Give. in 2019!



Introducing...

Gail Schiemann, ARA's New Education Director

Gail Schiemann has joined Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska as our Education Director. As Education Director, she works with our professional staff, family, caregivers, and community partners across Alaska by developing program content and recognizing the needs of caregivers.

Prior to becoming the Education

Director, Gail worked for the American Lung Association as Alaska's Program Director. Gail has extensive experience in Wellness Education and Prevention as well as the State of Alaska's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. She enjoys developing strategic proposals and plans that support mission work and holds a Masters degree in Public Health Practice.

Gail moved to Anchorage in 1999, and spends leisure time with family and participating in dog sports with her English Cocker Spaniels.

Welcome, Gail!

**

Unique protein networks in blood could offer new way to detect diseases of aging (from page 1)

The project is one of the most comprehensive analyses of secreted proteins to date, including samples from over 5,400 volunteers. The massive genetic data undertaking was made possible by collaboration between scientists at the Icelandic Heart Association, the Intramural Research Program, the Switzerland-based multinational pharmaceutical company Novartis, and SomaLogic, a Colorado-based proteomics company.

The team crafted a panel of DNA aptamers – special combinations of small nucleic acid chains that bind to specific proteins – that gave them the capability to

measure and identify thousands of serum proteins.

The team then scanned serum samples from a representative group of AGES study participants who ranged from age 66 to 96. They found 27 unique protein expression networks or modules, many of which were found to be tied to past or present bouts with – or even future likelihood of – chronic diseases of aging such as dementia, diabetes, hardening of the arteries, metabolic syndrome and heart disease.

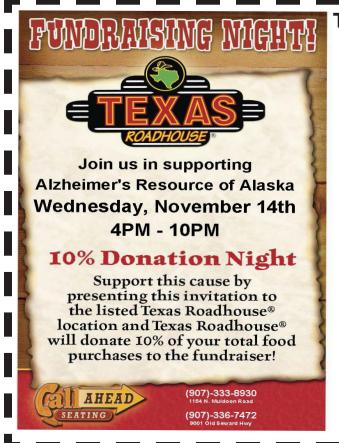
The scientists with the AGES study see the serum proteins as potential new types of easy-to-sample, low-cost biomarkers. They hope further study of data from

these unique protein networks can someday help us better understand how common diseases of aging leave their mark in the body and progress over time, opening up potential new therapeutic avenues.

National Institute on Aging Reference: Emilsson V et al. Co-regulatory networks of human serum proteins link genetics to disease. Science. 2018 Aug 2. pii: eaaq1327. doi: 10.1126/science.aaq1327.

We participate in workplace giving!

Check with your employer to see if workplace giving is available. Look us up by CFC #52943.



To participate, cut out and bring this invitation to either:

Texas Roadhouse on Old Seward

Or

Texas Roadhouse on Muldoon Road

By using this invitation, and at no additional cost to you, Texas Roadhouse will donate 10% of your total food purchase to Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska!

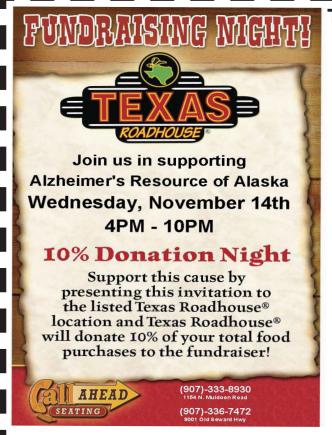
Scan to get this invitation on your phone!





November marks the 35th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan declaring the first National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness month.

For our November Alzheimer's Awareness month opportunities, please check out the memory screenings, virtual dementia tours, and other offerings on page 10.



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Scan to get this invitation on your phone!



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"My bearings are rusted." - An excerpt of a post by Alaskan blogger Janice Kaiser

"Oh mom. With a full heart, I sit here and watch you as you sleep. You seem to sleep most of the day away. And you will awaken, and get your bearings. You always check your watch. You don't think it is working properly because the day sneaks away, as you sleep.

Most of your waking hours, you seem so lost. You have spent so much time being angry, and lashing out. Maybe it is because you knew this was coming. That you would enter this stage of a disease that steals you from me, one heartbeat at a time...

...This past weekend, you were only awake for a little more than 4 hours in a day. And you are so confused. You keep thinking when you wake up that it is morning.

"...you will waken, and get your bearings. You always check your watch. You don't think it is working because the day sneaks away, as you sleep."

You sigh a lot. Your shoulders hurt. The Icy Hot is right next to you, but you just cannot see it for some reason. And as you look at me, you smile. And it warms my heart. And it just kills me, too. Because some of the times you do look at me, you don't see me. I'm not sure who you think you are looking at, but I know in my heart it is not me.

On another occasion, you were laughing during a particularly gruesome part in a Bourne movie. And I know it was just because you had woken and were still getting your bearings. I even mentioned it to you, as you tried to stand and were all wobbly.

You said, 'I think my bearings are rusted.' Yeah; rusted. Unfortunately, the rusting is taking place in your brain and I really hurt inside that I cannot help you. I can assist you, but I cannot make this better or make it go away...



...Alzheimer's steals those we love from us, one brain cell at a time. It is relentless and non-discriminatory – it chooses whomever it wants. There are all sorts of theories about prevention, but there is no cure. No cure in time for my mom. Hopefully, by the time my kids are elders, there will be no Alzheimer's. Because I do not want to fade away in front of my children the way my mom is fading in front of me.

I understand now, why so many people say, 'I can't be around her (him) because I want to remember them the way they were.' And one of the saddest parts about that statement, is because you stay away, you are no longer in their minds or memories. And it is lose-lose, all the way around.

"Alzheimer's steals those we love from us, one brain cell at a time."

Tonight my mom told me again that I am her best friend. She hugged my neck. When she was forgetful about what we were discussing, I told her it was okay and that she did not need to fake a memory she did not have. I told her that is what she has me for. Her reply? 'Oh my darling daughter, I need you for far more than memories. You are my love and I am so blessed you are my daughter. I love you.'And that makes every ugly moment worth it."

Janice Kaiser is a mother and grandmother, and also a caregiver of her mother, who lives with Alzheimer's disease. She writes frequently about her experiences with her mother as a caregiver and her day to day family life on her blog, "Some musings of a mom..." This excerpt can be read in its entirety by visiting https://kaiserswest.wordpress.com.







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These contributions received between July 1 - September 30

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THANK YOU

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska would like to thank those who participated in this year's fall event, "Return to Morocco."

Through your participation, our event was a success. We could not do it without donors like you! Thank you!

Volunteer & In-Kind Contributors

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> Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska



Statewide Webinars Connect with us via GoToMeeting or by Telephone

Email applications or questions to: ksilver@alzalaska.org.

Family Caregiver Webinars

Gay Wellman: 822-5620; gwellman@alzalaska.org

Decision Making

Saturday, 10/13,1-2:30 pm

Driving & Dementia

Saturday, 11/10, 1-2:30 pm

Legal Issues for Family Caregivers

Saturday, 12/8, 1-2:30 pm

Professional Webinars

Amber Smith: 586-6044; asmith@alzalaska.org

Person-Centered Care

Tuesday, 10/16, Noon-1pm

The Power of Music in Caring for People with Dementia

Tuesday, 11/20, Noon-1pm

Communication Tips for Caregivers Tuesday, 12/18, Noon-1pm

Classes & Events around the state

ANCHORAGE

1750 Abbott Road, 561-3313

ABC Presentations
20 Questions, 100
Answers, 6 perspectives
Part I - Monday, 10/22
Part II - Monday, 10/29
10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

Bathing Without the Battle Monday, 11/5 10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

The Power of Music Monday, 11/12 10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

Decision Making Monday, 11/26 10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

Dementia and the Holidays Monday, 12/3 10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

Movie: Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter Monday, 12/10 10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

Care for the Caregiver Monday, 12/17 10-11:30 am or 5:30-7 pm

Savvy Caregiver*
Saturdays, 10/27-12/08
10-Noon

Virtual Dementia Tour*
Monday, 11/19
Appointments available
from 9-Noon or 1-4:40 pm

Brain Works* Tuesdays, 11/13-12/18 10-11:30 am

Mind Matters I*
Wednesdays, 11/14-12/26
10-11:30 am

Mind Matters II*
Thursdays, 11/15/12/27
10-11:30 am
Art Links

Fridays - Every Week 11 am-Noon

MAT SU VALLEY

10355 E. Palmer Wasilla Hwy., 746-3413

ABC Presentations
Bathing Without a Battle
Wednesday, 10/24
1-2:30 pm (Located at
Mat-Su Health Services)

PAC Training: "Normal" vs "Not Normal" Aging Monday, 11/5 1-2:30 pm (Located at Sunshine Community Health Center, Talkeetna)

When Does Forgetting Become a Worry? Wednesday, 11/7 1:30-2:30pm (Takes place at Mat-Su Health Foundation)

Joyful Moments-Meaningful Activities Tuesday, 11/13 1-2:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

Movie: Alive Inside Tuesday, 12/4 1-2:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

Dementia Care Essentials* Thursdays 10/18 to 11/15 11-1:00 pm Registration is required.

Virtual Dementia Tour *
Monday, 10/8
Appointments available
1-5 pm; Registration
Required. (Takes place at
Talkeetna Public Library)

Virtual Dementia Tour *
Monday, 11/12
Appointments available
10-4 pm; Registration
Required

Mind Matters Wednesdays, 10/17-12/12 10:30-Noon

<u>Art Links</u> Fridays - Every Week 1-2:00 pm **JUNEAU**

3225 Hospital Drive, 586-6044

ABC Presentations
20 Questions, 100
Answers, 6
Perspectives - Part I
Tuesday, 10/23
12-1:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

20 Questions, 100 Answers, 6 Perspectives - Part II Tuesday, 10/30 12-1:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

PAC: Positive Physical Approach and Hand Under Hand Tuesday, 11/13 12-1:30 pm or 5:30-7 pm

Virtual Dementia Tour* Friday, 11/2, 10-4 pm Saturday, 11/3, 9-2 pm Appointments Available **FAIRBANKS**

565 University Ave., #2, 452-2277

ABC Presentations Movie: Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter Tuesday, 10/16 5:30-7 pm

Dementia: Hints for the Holidays Tuesday, 11/20 5:30-7 pm

Virtual Dementia Tour *
Monday, 11/12
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Appointment Required

Mind Matters*
Thursdays, 10/25-12/13
1-2:30 pm

Art Links
Thursdays - Every Week
11:00-noon

Memory Cafe

Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI) Every 3rd Tuesday, 10/16, 11/20, 12/18, 1-2:30pm See page 9 for additional offerings that include:

- Caregiver Webinars
- Professional Webinars

Memory Screenings

November is Alzheimer's Awareness month. We will be offering free memory screenings on the following dates:

Anchorage, 1750 Abbott Road 561-3313, contact@alzalaska.org Tuesday, 11/6, 9-4 pm

Mat-Su Valley, 10355 E. Palmer Wasilla Hwy 746-3413, jdowning@alzalaska.org
Tuesday, 11/6, 10-4 pm

Juneau, 3225 Hospital Drive 586-6044, asmith@alzalaska.org Thursday, 11/15, 9-5 pm

Fairbanks, 565 University Ave, #2 452-2277, jadams@alzalaska.org Friday, 11/2, 9-4 pm

Screenings are free to attend. For additional information, please call us at 561-3313.

* Registration Required



A safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to share experiences and solutions.

Statewide Telephone Support	Group			
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska	Caregiver	1st Saturday 1-2 PM 3rd Wednesday 1-2 PM Dial in 1-877-216-1555, Code 927989		Gay Wellman 822-5620 or (800) 478-1080 x5
Anchorage				
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 1750 Abbott Rd. Chester Park Cooperative 2020 Muldoon Rd.	Caregiver Caregiver Caregiver Caregiver	2nd Thursday 4th Thursday 2nd Tuesday 1st & 3rd Friday	12PM-1:30 PM 5:30-7:00 PM 5:30-7:00 PM 10 -11:30 AM	Debbie Chulick 561-3313 Ann Farris 561-3313 Kim Jung
				561-3313
Eagle River				
Holy Spirit Episcopal Church 17545 N. Eagle River Loop Rd.	Caregiver	2nd Thursday	5:00-6:30 PM	Debbie Chulick 561-3313
Fairbanks				
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 565 University Ave. Suite 2	Caregiver	2nd Tuesday 3rd Tuesday	5:30-7:00 PM 11:30-1:00 PM	Joan Adams 452-2277
Homer				
Homer Senior Center	Caregiver	2 & 4th Thursdays	2:30-3:30 PM	Pam Hooker 235-7655
Ketchikan				
Ketchikan Senior Center Upper Level	Caregiver	Call for more information		Bernice 225-8080
Kodiak				
Kodiak Senior Center 302 Erskine Ave.	Caregiver	4th Thursday	12:30-1:30 PM	486-6181
Mat-Su Valley				
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska 10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy. AK Veterans & Pioneer Home	Caregiver Caregiver	2nd Wednesday First Friday	1-2:30 PM 10:00-11:30 AM	Kim Jung 561-3313 Janice Downing 746-3413
Seward				/40-3413
Seward Senior Center	Caregiver	4th Thursday	1-2 PM	224-5604
Sitka		- In Indioday		
Brave Heart Volunteers 120 Katlian Street Soldotna	Caregiver	Call for more info.		747-4600
Soldotna Senior Center	Caregiver	2nd & Last Tuesday	1-3 PM	Judy Warren 262-1280
Sterling Senior Center	Caregiver	1st Tuesday	1-2 PM	262-1280 or (800) 776-8210



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Strengthened by Your Legacy Planning

One important source of financial support to the Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska is through the generosity and foresight of people who have thoughtfully left a bequest in their wills. By leaving a bequest, individuals have contributed a sustaining gift for future generations allowing us to meet the needs of Alaskans with Alzheimer's disease.