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NEW ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION RESEARCH GRANTS FUND MULTIPLE INVESTIGATIONS OF NON-DRUG TREATMENTS

Latest Round of International Research Grants Builds on Promising Areas of Alzheimer’s Research and Fills Gaps Where More Study is Needed

CHICAGO, October 24, 2014 – As millions of baby boomers are entering the age of greatest risk for Alzheimer’s disease, many recent late-stage drug trials have produced negative results. While the majority of drug trials are funded by government and pharmaceutical companies, the Alzheimer’s Association is filling a gap in research by funding several new studies of non-drug therapies. These newly funded projects include:

• A 12-week intervention of exercise or cognitive stimulation, or a combination of the two, for lowering the risk for cognitive decline and dementia in older adults. The study is being led by Amy Jak, Ph.D., at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Jak is receiving $246,978 over 3 years in funding for the study.

• An evaluation of the impact of an eight-week aerobic interval training regimen on the brain and thinking abilities in people with type 2 diabetes. The study is being led by Gail Musen, Ph.D., at the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston. Dr. Musen is receiving $250,000 over 3 years in funding for the study.

• A study of Skill-Building through Task-Oriented Motor Practice (STOMP) for improving daily life skills and delaying the decline of these skills in people with dementia. STOMP utilizes repetitive therapy and a learning technique that focuses on immediate correct steps instead of trial-and-error to strengthen and preserve memory for completing daily living tasks. For example, repetitively practicing the correct way to make a sandwich may help the brain “rewire” how to do the task correctly. The study is being led by Carrie Ciro, Ph.D., at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences. Dr. Ciro is receiving $99,967 over 2 years in funding for the study.

“The Alzheimer's Association International Research Grant Program (IRGP) is at the heart of the association’s commitment to advancing Alzheimer's research,” said Maria Carrillo, Ph.D., Vice President of Medical and Scientific Relations for the Alzheimer’s Association. “We aim to ensure that, as much as is possible with the available funds, all promising research paths are being pursued.”
“These three grants in particular help advance a vision for a future where non-pharmacological interventions will be available and may be used hand-in-hand with drug therapies to prevent and treat Alzheimer’s disease. This approach is effective in other deadly diseases, including heart disease and cancer,” Carrillo added.

A two-year clinical trial reported at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference in July gave strong evidence that a combination of lifestyle changes may be beneficial in overall healthy aging and preventing cognitive decline. The trial, which is led out of the University of Kuopio by Miia Kivipelto, M.D., Ph.D., is known as the Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to Prevent Cognitive Impairment and Disability (FINGER Study). The 1,260 older adults in the trial, whose ages ranged from 60 to 77, were divided into two groups. One group received an intervention that included nutritional guidance, physical exercise, cognitive training, social activities and management of heart health risk factors, while the control group received only regular health advice. After two years, the intervention group performed significantly better on a comprehensive scale of memory and thinking, and on specific tests of memory and executive function (including planning, judgment and problem-solving).

The IRGP is a part of a larger overall research funding effort from the Alzheimer’s Association, which is the largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer’s and dementia research in the world. During the 2014 fiscal year, the Alzheimer’s Association made investments totaling nearly $14 million to 88 scientific investigations. Included in this funding is this latest round of research grants, which supports 42 projects across the United States, Canada, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

The Alzheimer’s Association identifies and funds a wide range of scientific investigations, from basic biological science to studies addressing social and behavioral aspects of Alzheimer’s and other dementias. Fifteen of the studies supported through this new round of funding are designed to address areas specifically identified as being in critical need of more research, including:

- Understanding how heart disease and diabetes impacts risk for Alzheimer’s and dementia.
- Increasing our understanding of the genetics of Alzheimer’s risk.
- Discovering and validating new drug targets for treating Alzheimer’s and dementia.
- Discovering non-drug interventions for people with Alzheimer’s.

**About the Alzheimer’s Association**
The Alzheimer’s Association is the world’s leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s care, support and research. It is the largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer’s research. The Association’s mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Its vision is a world without Alzheimer’s. Visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) or call 800.272.3900.

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