NACC Project #2000-05  
Clinico-Pathologic Studies in Fronto-Temporal Dementia

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Project Description  
Fronto-temporal dementia (FTD) describes a heterogeneous group of non-Alzheimer degenerative dementias that share the pathological finding of atrophy involving mainly the frontal and/or anterior temporal lobes. This project's objectives are to examine reasons for this heterogeneity by pooling data collected on autopsied patients who were clinically characterized at five ADC sites. A frontal behavioral checklist is being operationalized by the ADC investigators, drawing on existing FTD rating scales, and then applied to the clinical information available from autopsied cases of FTD matched with cases of Alzheimer's Disease (AD). Cases of FTD with sufficiently detailed clinical records are being identified at each ADC, and matched as closely as possible with AD patients regarding sex, dementia severity and age. Data on history, behavioral symptoms, neurologic findings and their timing in relation to the clinical course are assembled for each case. Raters then independently examine records of the FTD and AD cases, blind to diagnosis, for the presence or absence of key behavioral, neurologic and historical features. The behavioral, clinical and neurological features that best distinguish FTD from AD will be determined. Heterogeneity of FTD will be explored by analyzing the extent to which different patterns of behavioral and clinical features of FTD are associated with demographic features (e.g. age at onset), severity of dementia (early, middle, late), genetics (family history; APO-E genotypes), and pathologic features (type of pathology underlying FTD; coexisting AD pathology). Broad groups of clinical features (subtypes of behavioral symptoms, aphasia, amyotrophy, Parkinsonism) will be correlated with types of histopathology (e.g., Pick's disease, Dementia Lacking Distinctive Histopathology). Rates of clinical progression of FTD and AD will be compared using measures of cognition and activities of daily living.

Contact Information  
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