NACC Project #3
A Multi-Center Collaboration to Evaluate Candidate Agents for AD Prevention Trials

Principal investigator
Michael Grundman, University of California San Diego

Collaborating centers
Baylor College of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, Duke University, Emory University, Johns Hopkins University, Mayo Clinic, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, New York University, Northwestern University, Oregon Health and Science University, University of Kentucky, University of Pittsburgh, University of Rochester, University of Texas Southwestern, Washington University

Project description
As our population ages, prevention campaigns will require effective prophylactic agents and optimized clinical trials that can demonstrate the efficacy of these agents in a rapid, efficient and minimally expensive manner.

In 1998, a group of 16 Alzheimer’s Disease Centers collected longitudinal neuropsychological and diagnostic data on nearly 5,000 normal individuals and persons with mild cognitive impairment. We are now poised to collect and evaluate data on specific medications, vitamins and supplements that may show promise in preventing cognitive decline, MCI and AD. One difficulty with previously designed AD prevention trials is that relatively few normal people entering a clinical trial develop AD, requiring thousands of participants and many years of follow-up.

AD prevention trials could be designed more efficiently if surrogate endpoints were available earlier in the disease process, prior to a clinical diagnosis of AD. For example, a diagnosis of MCI or evidence of cognitive decline on neuropsychological testing might prove to be useful surrogate endpoints. Similarly, decline in ADL performance and on disease staging instruments may prove very useful as surrogate endpoints in AD prevention trials. This project was structured to collect these important data.

Finally, this project assessed whether depressive symptoms are predictive of AD and are a factor to consider in designing prevention trials. Ultimately, the successful development of preventive agents for AD hinges on drug discovery and well-designed clinical trials. This project strives to advance the field in both of these areas.

Contact information
For information regarding the results of this study, please contact:
Leon Thal, MD
University of California San Diego Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
Phone 858-622-5800
http://adrc.ucsd.edu

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