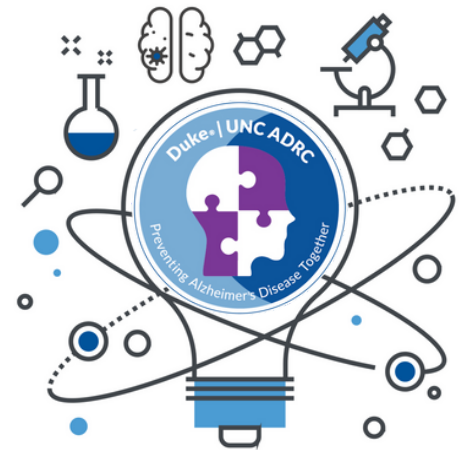


Healthy Brains Together

The Community Newsletter of the Duke-UNC Alzheimer's Disease Research Center



Duke-UNC Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC)

Our mission is to engage with our community to promote awareness and advocacy for brain health and encourage participation in research for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. We aim to create effective methods of prevention and treatment and to reduce racial/ethnic and urban/rural disparities associated with dementia. In this issue, we will highlight the importance of biological sample donation for research (page 3) and highlight a participant testimonial from our Memory & Aging study (page 4).

Duke-UNC ADRC attends AAIC 2023 conference

We attended the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in Amsterdam in July.



Our ADRC faculty presented on many topics including: an innovative clinic model to care for patients with mild cognitive impairment, the relationship between traumatic brain injury and dementia, the association of volunteering and cognitive function, eye/retinal imaging in patients with dementia, The NC Registry for Brain Health and the biology of dementia.

Congratulations to Miles Berger, Kathleen Welsh-Bohmer, Marianne Chanti-Ketterl, Gwenn Garden, Kim Johnson, Michael Lutz, Heidi Roth, and Jerry Wang who presented their work.

Lumbee Homecoming

We want to thank the Lumbee Tribe of NC and UNC Pembroke for hosting us at the Lumbee Homecoming 2023 event in Pembroke in July. We learned about Lumbee heritage and culture and were thrilled to have the chance to return this year to the event and talk to the community about brain health.



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Community Spotlight

Walk to End Alzheimer's Disease

Join us the Duke-UNC ADRC Brain Walkers and the Alzheimer's Association for the 2023 Walk to End Alzheimer's disease on Saturday, October 7th in Raleigh. Registration begins at 9 am and the opening ceremony starts at 10 am. Location: Halifax Mall, 300 N. Salisbury Street Raleigh, NC 27603.
<http://act.alz.org/goto/Duke-UNC-ADRC>

To register: click/scan the QR code



North Carolina Indian Senior Citizens Conference (NCISCC)

Join us and the NCISCC in Clinton on November 3rd for a conference designed to unite American Indian senior citizens and other individuals in the community. The theme this year is "Building our Future, Adjusting to Change". Events at the conference include a pageant of traditional attire for local native American tribes, a silent auction, and several workshops to learn about health, education, economic, cultural and spiritual needs.

To register: click/scan the QR code



Hispanic Heritage Month



September 15 to October 15 is recognized nationally as Hispanic Heritage Month. This is a time to proudly celebrate the contributions and influence of Hispanic/Latino individuals to the history and culture of the United States and North Carolina. Did you know that almost 10% of the NC population is Hispanic and 6 out of 10 Hispanics in NC are U.S. born?

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Events for NC

This organization lists a wide range of online events related to brain health and caregiving. Find out about exercise, nutrition and even estate planning events that you can attend. To learn about these upcoming events, click [here](#).

Get to know us & Biological donations

Christina Cameron is a clinical research coordinator for the Duke-UNC Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC)

Christina Cameron holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Christina has worked at Duke for over twelve years. Before joining the ADRC, she worked on the PREVENTABLE (NIH) study which seeks to learn if taking a statin could help older adults live well for longer by preventing dementia, disability, or heart disease.



Christina's research interests come from a strong family history of Alzheimer's disease. Her grandmother recently passed away from complications due to this illness. She works in clinical research in order to address health disparities in Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. She believes that trustworthiness can be established through open and honest communication with the people involved in research studies. In her free time, she is an avid traveler. She has visited all fifty states and looks forward to traveling abroad.

Importance of biological sample donations

Breakthrough research in the field of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias would not be possible without the generous donation of biological samples – including blood, tissue and other bodily fluids. Unfortunately, there are examples from the past in which such samples were obtained without agreement from the individuals causing understandable mistrust in the research process. Today we have built-in safeguards including a detailed process of communication between researchers and individuals to discuss the risks and benefits of the study, and how the samples will be obtained. It is vital that we take part in this consent process prior to making a voluntary decision about whether to participate in research.

The Duke-UNC ADRC is grateful to our Memory & Aging study participants who donate biological samples. With participant consent, these samples can help other researchers within our two universities learn more about brain health. Below are examples of current studies that collaborate with the Duke-UNC ADRC. In upcoming newsletters, we will highlight these studies in depth.



Dr. Niccolò Terrando is studying the association of the gut microbiome and cognitive impairment



Dr. Brad Goldstein is studying sense of smell and its relation to Alzheimer's



Dr. Robert Turner is studying the role of nonmedical factors that influence risk for developing dementia in Black men

Memory & Aging Study

The Duke–UNC Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center’s Memory & Aging Study works to identify the biological factors involved in normal brain aging and disease with the help of a diverse group of young and older people with and without memory impairments. We want to share with you a Memory & Aging participant testimonial about the impact of Alzheimer’s disease on her family and her motivation to participate in research.

Participant Testimonial



“I have a dog in the fight,” is how Michelle Charles explains her drive to take part in Alzheimer’s disease research. The story behind this sentiment has many layers. Michelle grew up in a family in which Alzheimer’s disease affected every generation, hitting women over 70 the hardest. Her mother cared for her grandmother and Michelle cared for her mother until she passed away in November 2022. Michelle’s mother’s brain was donated for research after her passing, leading Michelle to join the Memory & Aging study, forging a profound connection during a painful time.

Michelle recognizes the need for studies like Memory & Aging to include those most impacted by Alzheimer’s. She explains, “As a Black American and a woman, I have two strikes against me in the battle against Alzheimer’s because Black women are affected the most. I feel that I must do something.” She highlights the injustice of women spending their lives remembering everything for everyone else, only to face cognitive decline later in life. While she’s clear about her own reasons for participating, Michelle acknowledges the valid concerns within the African American community due to a history of harm from systems meant to provide care.

“If you choose to join a study, understand why you’re doing it. With dementia and Alzheimer’s devastating my family and the disproportionate impact on Blacks, I want to be part of the solution. This way, my children might grow old with their memories intact.”

Beyond the sense of purpose that participation brings, being part of the Memory & Aging study provides Michelle with an ongoing connection to her mother, even after her passing. During challenging days, she reminds herself, *“I’m part of this. Their grandma is part of this. I’m proud of that.”*

If you or someone you know is interested in participating, please share our contact information: **Phone: (919) 668–0281 Email: DUKEUNC-ORECore@duke.edu**