



Research Participation Opportunities

For more information on any of the research opportunities listed, please contact Sinéad Quinn at (404) 728-6957

The Department of Psychiatry at Wesley Woods is partnering with researchers at Duke University and the University of Mississippi to study the link between structural and biological causes of depression. Interested subjects must have no major psychiatric disorder, past or present, other than depression and must agree to have an autopsy upon death.

The Department of Psychiatry at Wesley Woods is conducting a study using Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to study major

depression in older adults. We need volunteers with and without depression who are at least 50 years old, currently experiencing an episode of depression or have no history of depression, no other major mental illness, generally healthy (medical conditions that are under control are acceptable), no history of neurological disease (such as Parkinson's disease, dementia, epilepsy or stroke) and are willing to have an MRI scan of the head. Participants will receive up to \$100 to compensate for their time participating in the study.

In the Mood

A Newsletter of the Fuqua Center for Late-Life Depression of Emory University

Volume 8, Issue 1
Winter/Spring 2010

New Treatment Option on the Horizon for Treatment-resistant Depression (TRD)

MAJOR DEPRESSION IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON MENTAL ILLNESSES IN THE UNITED STATES: more than 15 million American adults, or roughly 5 to 8 percent of the adult population, suffer some form of depression each year. While depression is highly treatable and responds to a variety treatment options, many people experience depression that continues or frequently recurs despite treatment with medications, psychotherapy or more intensive therapies (such as electroconvulsive therapy [ECT]). Treatment-resistant depression, or TRD, is generally defined as the continuation of depressive symptoms despite adequate antidepressant treatment.



Those who suffer from TRD may soon have a new treatment option. Deep Brain Stimulation, commonly referred to as DBS, involves a surgical procedure that has proven beneficial in the treatment of medication-resistant Parkinson's disease, essential tremor and dystonia. In patients who opt for DBS, doctors implant small electrodes, approximately one millimeter thick, in the areas of the brain believed to be involved in the neurological

or psychiatric disease. These electrodes deliver small, steady pulses of electricity that have been shown to modulate activity in these and connected brain regions such that more normal brain function is achieved. The technique is comparable to implanting an artificial pacemaker in the heart.

DBS is currently being tested as a potential treatment for severe, treatment-resistant depression at Emory (funded through several foundation grants; contact dbs@emory.edu for more details) and in two large, industry-sponsored multi-center trials (St. Jude Medical and Medtronic; see clinicaltrials.gov). (cont'd next page)

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- :-(Feeling sad or numb
- :-(No interest or pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- :-(Crying easily or for no reason
- :-(Feeling slowed down or feeling restless and irritable
- :-(Feeling worthless or guilty
- :-(Change in appetite; unintended change in weight
- :-(Trouble recalling things, concentrating or making decisions
- :-(Headaches, backaches or digestive problems
- :-(Problems sleeping, or wanting to sleep all of the time
- :-(Feeling tired all of the time
- :-(Thoughts about death or suicide



EMORY HEALTHCARE
WESLEY WOODS CENTER

Fuqua Center for Late-Life Depression
Wesley Woods Health Center, 4th Floor
1841 Clifton Rd., NE
Atlanta, GA 30329
404-728-6948
<http://www.fuquacenter.org>

Treatment options
Facts about depression
How to learn more



Who to call



Call 1-877-498-0096 to reach a registered nurse at Emory Health Connection

For information about the Fuqua Center, call Michele Lyn Miles at 404-728-6948

For NEW PATIENT appointments, call 404-728-6302

For telemedicine appointments, call 1-866-754-4325

For community clinical sites, call Pat Huskey at 404-728-6380

For information on community education call Cathy Rambach at 404-728-4558

For information on the Depression Support Group, call Michele Lyn Miles at 404-728-6948

For opportunities to participate in research studies, call Sinéad Quinn at 404-728-6957

For information on peer support, call Cathy Rambach at 404-728-4558

For information about Transitions Senior Program, call Ed Lawrence at 404-728-6975

To be added to our newsletter mailing list sign up at <http://fuqua-center.org/Newsletter> or call 404-728-6948

FUQUA CENTER: WHAT'S NEWS?

Welcome!

Cathy T. Rambach, RN, MS joined the Fuqua Center in May 2009. Cathy received her Bachelors of Science in Nursing from Northern Illinois University in 1972 and a Masters of Science in Mental Health Administration from Georgia State University in 1989. After working for 34 years as a nurse and administrator in the public behavioral healthcare arena, she retired from the State of Georgia in 2008. Cathy serves as a Project Coordinator for the Fuqua Center, responsible for the development and implementation of projects which strengthen the Center's community partnerships.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Dr. William McDonald, J.B. Fuqua Chair, on his appointment to Special Advisor to the Office of Governor on Mental Health. In this position, Dr. McDonald will play an important role advising Governor Sonny Perdue on the new Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Congratulations Dr. McDonald!

The Fuqua Center is proud to congratulate Eve Byrd, Executive Director, on receiving the Elsie Alvis Award for Outstanding Professionals in Gerontology. This award is presented by the Georgia Gerontology Society each year to one outstanding professional who has worked a minimum of 15 years of service in gerontology. Congratulations Ms. Byrd!



(New Treatment for TRD, *cont'd from cover*)

Scientists believe that this and other forms of brain stimulation modulate the areas of the brain responsible for mood regulation, exerting antidepressant effects. Initial clinical trials found that DBS improved many of the symptoms associated with treatment-resistant depression. Within a month of beginning treatment, improvements were noticed and lasted for at least one year.

Additionally, DBS is adjustable and reversible, features that offer increased safety and may contribute to the efficacy of the technique.

While DBS has offered patients with Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders new hope for symptom relief, scientists now believe that the technique may hold promise for other debilitating neuropsychiatric conditions. In addition to treatment-resistant depression studies, researchers are conducting DBS trials for epilepsy, chronic pain and Tourette's syndrome. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved DBS for the treatment of treatment-refractory obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD).

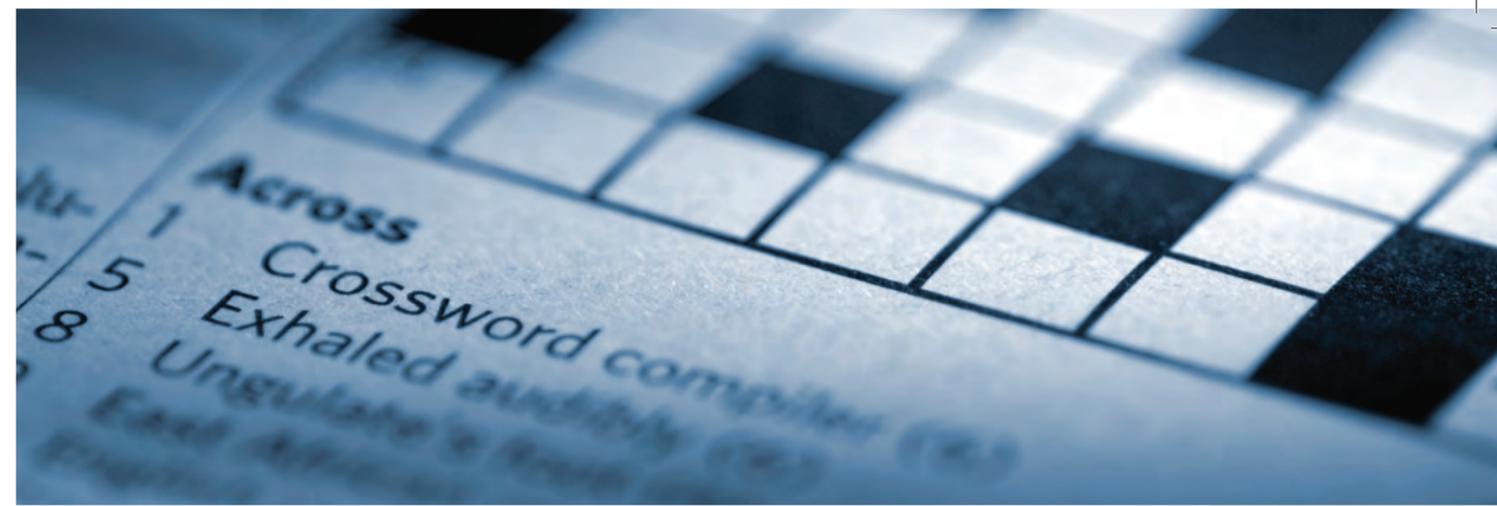
Written by Phoebe Alleman, Fuqua Center Intern, MPH Candidate. To view this article complete with citations, please visit www.fuquacenter.org/Newsletter

Legislative Corner

Dr. Frank Shelp, Commissioner of the new Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) is asking all mental health advocates to ask their legislators to hold the line on the proposed DBHDD budget. The DBHDD is under review by the U.S. Department of Justice for poor care in state hospitals and lack of community services. The per capita national average for mental health is \$99.54. Georgia currently spends \$48.98

and is ranked 45th in the nation on mental health spending. In comparison, Georgia spends at the national average on general health.

For the new DBHDD leadership to be successful we must all advocate that our legislators hold the line of the 2011 budget and make the commitment to fund over the next three years behavioral health services equivalent to their commitment to other health conditions.



Slowing the Brain's Decline

IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE that physical exercise helps keep our bodies fit. But did you know that as we age, our brains also need to be exercised in order to keep them healthy? Physical changes to the brain start in early adulthood, around 27 years of age, but become more pronounced after about age 60. These physical changes manifest in several ways, most noticeably in reduced working memory. For this reason, older adults may experience difficulties with mental tasks like remembering telephone numbers and grocery lists and identifying faces.

Happily, there is good news for those who arrive at the store with only a vague memory of their mental grocery list. Several groups of researchers have suggested that exercising the brain with activities like brain teasers, crossword puzzles and Sudoku may slow the age-related decline in memory and mental speed that affect most people. Indeed, the theory that a person is born with all the brain cells he or she will ever have is obsolete; in the 1970s, scientists found that new brain cells form throughout life. More recently, research has shown that older adults particularly benefit from training in specific memory tasks, such as recalling names and faces.

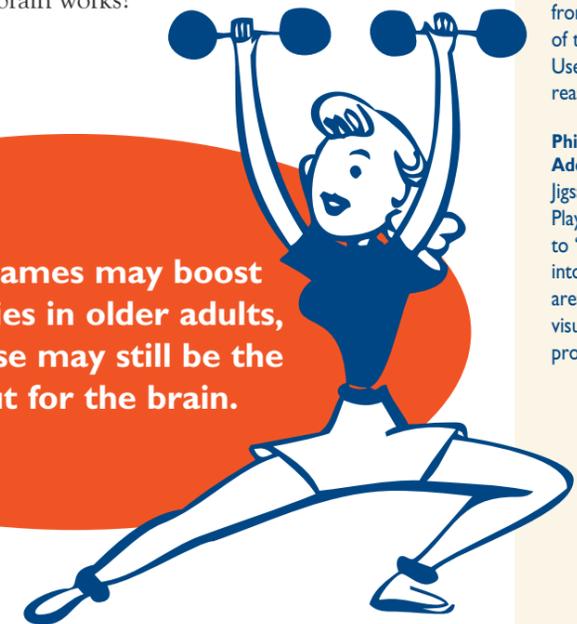
Despite scientific findings that brain games may boost cognitive abilities in older adults, physical exercise may still be the best workout for the brain. Studies conducted at the University of Illinois have found that seniors who began an exercise regimen had faster reaction times and better concentration after six months compared to a similar group who did not exercise. One theory

for this effect holds that physical exercise benefits blood vessels throughout the body and may prevent brain function problems related to blood vessel disruptions in the brain.

Finally, social connections may prove beneficial in slowing mental decline in aging adults. Those with multiple social ties, such as church groups, social groups, family visits, or phone calls with family or friends, are less likely to experience cognitive problems than those without social ties, according to a group of Harvard University researchers. These sorts of ties seem to boost people's sense of control, allowing them to manage stress more effectively.

So whether you prefer to play a word search game, take a brisk walk or join a club for your favorite hobby, the message is clear: exercising the brain works!

While brain games may boost cognitive abilities in older adults, physical exercise may still be the best workout for the brain.



Source: U.S. News, "Keeping Your Brain Fit," Christine Larson, <http://health.usnews.com/articles/health/brain-and-behavior/2008/01/31/keeping-your-brain-fit.html?PageNr=1>

Brain Games

Work out your memory and improve your cognitive abilities with these free computer games!

WordCrunch (from RocketSnail Games)
Word-search game with daily themes that tests vocabulary, visual perception and mental speed.

Numbology (from Game Links)
Features Tetris-style block building with integrated math problems. Players create math equations to keep a rising flow of blocks from hitting the top of the game screen. Uses spatial and logical reasoning skills.

Phit (from AddictingGames)
Jigsaw-type puzzler. Players figure out how to 'Phit' different pieces into the proper shaded area. Exercise your visual and relational prowess with this one!