Studying Alzheimer’s Disease in African Americans

The project established the first African American dementia diagnostic clinic in Milwaukee Health Services, a federally qualified health center.

**Description:** The Recruitment of Middle-Aged African Americans for Studies of Preclinical Alzheimer’s Disease project expanded recruitment and baseline testing of the Wisconsin Registry for Alzheimer’s Prevention (WRAP) study to include adult children of African Americans with Alzheimer’s disease living in Milwaukee County. WRAP is designed to identify neuropsychological, genetic and lifestyle markers of incipient Alzheimer’s disease in adult children of parents with Alzheimer’s disease. This information is a necessary first step in developing new treatments and lifestyle interventions to delay the onset or slow the progression of the disease.

**Relevance:** African Americans are twice as likely as Caucasians to develop Alzheimer’s disease, but much less likely to be diagnosed and treated for the disease.

**Results:** WRAP study participation increased by 8 percent during the grant period, resulting in nearly 200 African American and Latino enrollees. Memory assessments of study participants recorded high rates of diabetes (43 percent), high blood pressure (82 percent) and high lipid levels (55 percent), suggesting that memory loss may be related to the presence of these conditions, as well as anxiety and depression.

The project team worked with Milwaukee Health Services to establish the first diagnostic memory clinic in a federally qualified health center, specifically for the African American community. The project also created a care coordination program connecting African Americans with dementia to support services, provided access to research studies and encouraged the Milwaukee community to take a role in early detection and prevention of Alzheimer’s disease.

Originally funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program in 2008, Milwaukee Health Services is providing infrastructure support for the memory clinic; and the Helen Bader Foundation in Milwaukee provided $300,000 in support for the project.

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**RECRUITMENT OF MIDDLE-AGED AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR STUDIES OF PRECLINICAL ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE: DEVELOPMENT OF A MINORITY RECRUITMENT MODEL IN MILWAUKEE**

**Principal Investigator:** Mark Sager, MD, Medicine, SMPH

**Grant Program:** Targeted Education and Research

**Award:** $219,543 over three years