

Fighting the Scourge of Alzheimer's Disease on All Fronts

Center of Excellence on Brain Aging and Dementia

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Since the 1970's, researchers at NYU Langone have played a leading role in studying how Alzheimer's disease affects the brain, and in diagnosing and devising treatments for the disease. Our scientists were among the first to characterize amyloid, the plaque-forming protein implicated in Alzheimer's, and provided the first comprehensive description of the clinical stages of the disease. As the scope of research has broadened, NYU Langone remains at the forefront, bringing its diverse basic and clinical research programs on brain aging together under the aegis of the William and Sylvia Silberstein Institute for Aging and Dementia. The institute has achieved significant success with individual NYU aging-related research programs, and in 2007, established a strong clinical care program, the Barlow Center for Memory Evaluation and Treatment. The program is unique in New York City for providing "one-stop" multi-disciplinary evaluation and clinical care, with access to the most advanced options for early diagnosis and treatment.

The new Brain Aging and Dementia Center of Excellence will integrate a broader range of investigators and clinicians across the NYU network—creating an extraordinary translational research and clinical capability with an unprecedented opportunity to look at the whole picture—from one cell in the brain to the entire person. Collaborating at the highest level, we will advance on all fronts against this cruel and deadly adversary.

The Brain Aging and Dementia Center of Excellence is providing a new and expanding clinical service that is the first in New York City to team specialists in neurology, psychiatry, medicine, psychology and social services into an integrated unit that provides the most comprehensive clinical evaluations available. Recognizing that different disorders leading to dementia are becoming increasingly related at both a molecular and treatment level, NYU clinician-scientists treating Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and less common or atypical dementias, have consolidated their services. The Brain Aging and Dementia Center of Excellence has a constituency of over 30 independently funded investigators with a research portfolio of NIH support of over \$18 million annually. NYU investigators have already contributed directly to the clinical development of all currently approved treatments for AD, particularly memantine. A newly expanded clinical trials program in the center will extend the capabilities for quickly moving anti-dementia compounds emerging from pre-clinical drug discovery programs into early clinical trials.

Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia affecting people over 65, is a devastating brain disease that slowly destroys mental function, personality, and lives. Currently this dreaded disease afflicts more than five million Americans, a number expected to reach 16 million by the year 2050. There is no more timely biomedical initiative than the one undertaken by NYU Langone's Brain Aging and Dementia Center of Excellence, and no more synergistic alliance to make NYU Langone the "go-to" institution for early diagnosis and comprehensive treatment of emergent memory problems.

