Study Finds Method to Predict Alzheimer’s Within 2 Years of Screening

A study published in the Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease has found a way to provide earlier diagnosis for patients with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) so that they can receive treatments as early as possible. During the study, researchers accurately predicted at a rate of 90% which of the research participants with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) would receive a clinical diagnosis of AD within the following 2 years and which would not develop the disease at all.

Researchers combined brain imaging analysis with a neuropsychological assessment for the detection of incipient dementia in individuals with MCI and achieved remarkable sensitivity and specificity.

Baseline measures included magnetic resonance imaging measures of hippocampal vol-

Researchers Hone in on Importance of Geriatric Resources in Trauma Care

The Emergency Nurses Association has launched its new online Geriatric Emergency Nursing Education Course (GENE), which provides tools to assess special needs in older adults, recognize atypical symptom presentation, and coordinate care that will improve patient outcomes. Available at http://www.ena.org, the course also includes 17 interactive modules; up to 15.21 credit hours; and best practices for triage, discharge, and patient and family education.

In related news, older patients who received extra geriatric care after a traumatic injury returned to approximately two thirds more daily activities than those without a consultation, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association Surgery.

Study patients were 65 and older and had experienced a range of injuries, including minor rib fractures from bad falls and serious head injuries or multiple fractures from car accidents.

One year after their hospital discharge, patients were asked if they were able to return to independently completing regular activities, such as walking, bathing, light housework, and simple shopping trips. According to the study, patients who saw an additional geriatrician during their hospital stay were less dependent on others to complete daily tasks 1 year later—most notably in their ability to leave the house to shop for personal items. Participants who received the geriatric consult had access to geriatricians who could discontinue unnecessary medications, avoid medications that older patients are sensitive to, promote physical rehabilitation, prevent delirium, and pay attention to home situations such as where patients lived and who their caretakers were.

A recent article in the Journal of Gerontological Nursing (JGN) addressed the importance of geriatric resources in trauma care. For more information, see Maxwell, Mion, and Minnick’s article in the December 2013 issue of JGN.


Meditation May Help Slow Progression of Alzheimer’s Disease

Brain changes associated with meditation and stress reduction may help slow the progression of age-related cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, according to a pilot study published online in *Neuroscience Letters*.

The study evaluated adults ages 55 to 90 in Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center’s Cognitive Neurology Unit. Fourteen adults diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment were included in the study.

Participants were randomized two to one, either to a group who participated in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) using meditation and yoga, or a control group who received normal care. The study group met for 2 hours each week for 8 weeks. They also participated in a day-long mindfulness retreat and were encouraged to continue their practice at home for 15 to 30 minutes per day.

All participants underwent functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) at baseline and then again after 8 weeks to determine if there were any changes in the structures of the brain or in brain activity. The results of the fMRI showed that the group engaged in MBSR had significantly improved functional connectivity in the areas of the default mode network. Additionally, both groups experienced atrophy of the hippocampus, but those who practiced MBSR experienced less atrophy.


High-Density Foam Mattresses Shown to Prevent Pressure Ulcers

Nursing homes that use high-density foam mattresses may not need to turn residents every 2 hours to prevent pressure ulcers, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatric Society*.

The Turning for Ulcer ReductionN (TURN) study, with nursing home residents at moderate or high risk of developing pressure ulcers, randomly assigned partici-
and skin care at each turn. No serious pressure ulcers developed during the study.

Previously, mattresses exposed residents to higher pressure, requiring more frequent turning to relieve pressure. Nursing homes formerly used mattresses that were made of spring coils and covered thick plastic. Newer high-density foam mattresses, however, expose residents to less pressure, and as this study showed, 2-hour turning may no longer be necessary.


Free Interactive Program Available for Improving Care for Dementia Patients

AMDA—Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine (AMDA) has released a program of free, interactive courses that help decrease the inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications for nursing home residents and improve the overall quality of care given to individuals with dementia. Two courses, “Dementia in the Long-Term Care Setting, Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribers” and “Dementia in the Long-Term Care Setting, Clinical Practice Guideline for Non-Prescribers,” were developed by AMDA with assistance and funding from an Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ) grant.

A 5-hour professional development experience, each course focuses on the recognition, assessment, treatment, and monitoring of dementia in the long-term care facility and is free, along with a certificate of completion, to both prescribers and non-prescribers. The only requirement is that participants agree to take an immediate, 3-month, and 6-month post-course survey. These surveys will help AMDA evaluate the impact of the course on patient care. Participants will also have the option to apply for continuing education credits. For more information, visit http://amda-training.com.