Rhode Island Hospital Launches NIH-Funded Prevent Alzheimer's Disease Registry

The Rhode Island Hospital Alzheimer's disease and Memory Disorders Center recently launched a program to help find effective ways to delay early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease (AD). The program, Prevent AD: The Rhode Island Alzheimer Prevention Registry is funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Aging and is being launched in collaboration with the Butler Hospital Aging and Memory Program and the Memorial Hospital Center for Primary Care and Prevention.

The Prevent AD registry is designed to provide those at risk for developing Alzheimer's disease access to the most promising prevention treatment trials. Alzheimer's disease affects more than 20,000 people in Rhode Island, 5 million people in the U.S. and 35 million people worldwide. It is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States and the only cause of death among the top 10 in the United States that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed.

"Alzheimer's disease is one of the most complex and common forms of dementia and it is placing an enormous burden on our aging population," said Brian R. Ott, MD, director of the Alzheimer's disease and Memory Disorders Center at Rhode Island Hospital. "The Prevent AD registry will allow us to identify the residents in Rhode Island and southern New England who are interested in being part of our efforts to develop effective treatments aimed at ways to delay early symptoms and one day, hopefully to prevent it from developing at all."

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning -- thinking, remembering and reasoning -- and behavioral abilities, to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Dementia ranges in severity from the mildest stage, when it is just beginning to affect a person's functioning, to the most severe stage, when the person must depend completely on others for basic activities of daily living. Mild cognitive impairment is an intermediate phase between dementia and normal aging when people are forgetful but still able to function well in their daily activities. Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is becoming a major focus for early intervention studies.

Prevent AD registry participants will be informed of AD prevention studies for which they may be qualified, as well as timely educational information on the latest in brain health. The Prevent AD registry is currently recruiting participants for two studies:

The Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative: A multi-year longitudinal study to determine the best biological markers of early AD using cutting-edge brain imaging techniques and laboratory tests.
The ASPREE Clinical trial: An international study of 19,000 people aged 65 and over to determine the safety and effectiveness of daily aspirin for the prevention of AD and dementia and preservation of health over six years.

Registry participants will receive information on these two studies and also will receive updates and information about upcoming research programs funded by the Alzheimer's disease Cooperative Study, a consortium of research centers around the country, including Rhode Island Hospital, funded to carry out symptomatic and secondary prevention studies for AD.

To qualify for the Prevent AD registry, participants must be at least 50 years of age and be willing to take some brief tests of memory to determine eligibility. People with currently normal memory as well as those with mild memory loss are encouraged to participate. Those who already have a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s or dementia are excluded from the registry. For more information or to sign up for the Prevent AD registry, please contact Michele Astphan at 401-444-0788 or email mastphan@lifespan.org.