Pilot Collaborative PET Imaging Study

Type of Project: Multi-center Clinical Imaging Research

Methods: Imaging, Clinical Evaluation

Status: Funded by the National Institute on Aging. $2,384,904 total ($58,000 this year at the University of Utah)


In Collaboration With: University of Michigan, University of California at Davis, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, Duke University, Indiana University, University of Texas – Southwestern, University of California at Irvine, University of Washington

Investigators: Norman L. Foster, M.D. (Project Principal Investigator), Angela Y. Wang, Ph.D., Edward Zamrini, M.D. and Site Investigators and Consultants at 10 U.S. Universities

Project Summary:
This is a collaborative, pragmatic, pilot study to evaluate the value of adding FDG-PET to the evaluation of patients with suspected, but uncertain frontotemporal dementia. Nine study sites have recruited patients with symptoms suggesting frontotemporal dementia at the time of their initial dementia evaluation. Patients then receive FDG-PET scans and are followed for 18 months by their treating physician and by a study physician who is unaware of the scan results. The clinical diagnosis of the treating and study physicians will be compared to a “gold standard” diagnosis provided during a consensus conference by a panel of dementia experts. Analysis of results will determine whether the results of the FDG-PET scan were helpful in increasing the accuracy and diagnostic certainty of the treating physician as compared to the study physician.

Potential Benefits:
FDG-PET scanning is expensive. This study will provide important evidence to decide when this kind of brain scanning ought to be used by physicians performing dementia evaluations.