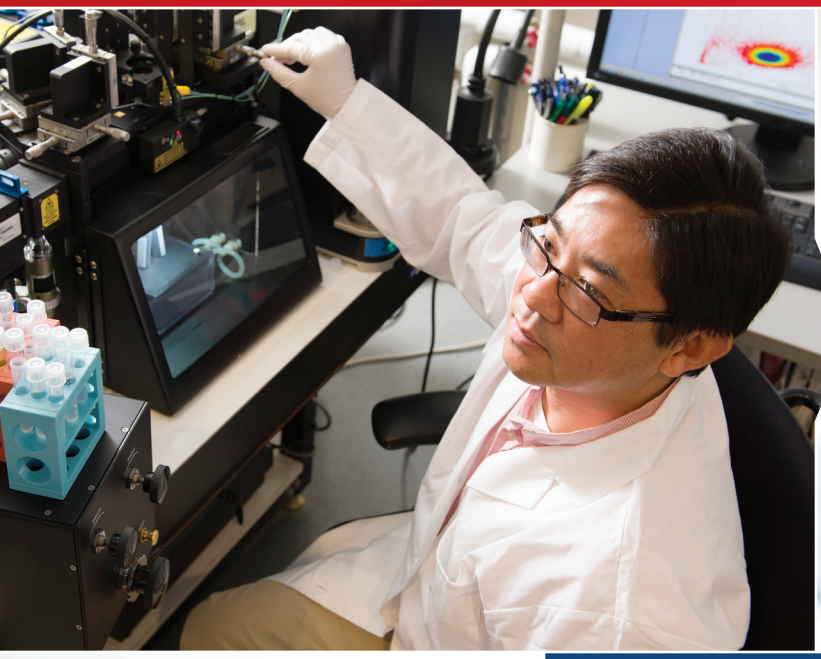
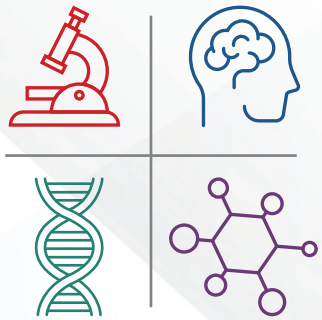
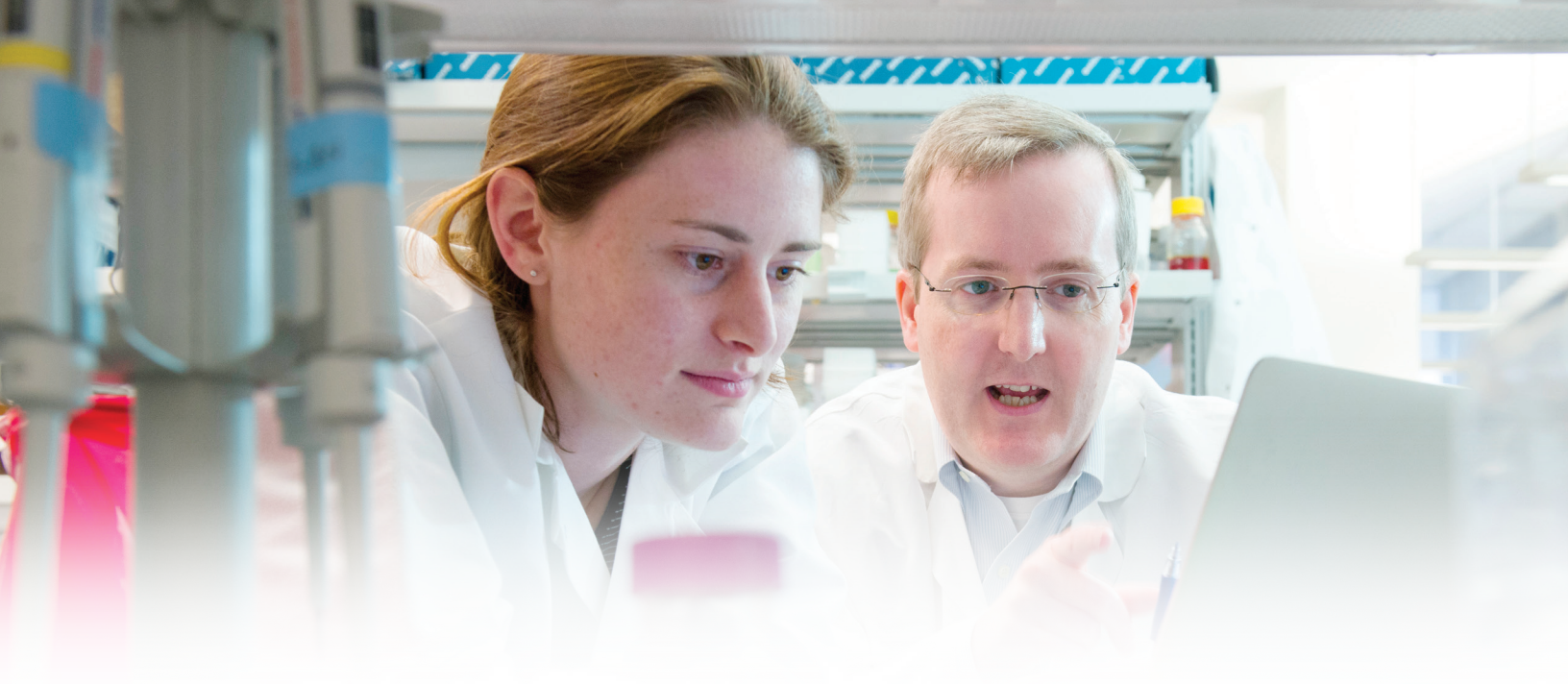
NIH NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING





NIH National Institute on Aging

Where Research Comes of Age



About NIA

The National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), was established in 1974 to improve the health and well-being of older adults through research. NIA conducts and supports genetic, biological, clinical, behavioral, social, and economic research on aging and the challenges and needs of older adults. NIA is at the forefront of scientific discovery about the nature of healthy aging to extend the healthy, active years of life. It is also the lead federal agency for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research.

NIA supports scientific initiatives and innovation at universities, medical centers, and research institutes across the U.S. and around the world; conducts research at its scientific laboratories in Baltimore and Bethesda, Maryland; and maintains an active communications and outreach program to share knowledge and disseminate information to the broader research community and to the public. Its work has led to important scientific discoveries about the aging process, age-related diseases and conditions, and the needs of the growing older adult population.

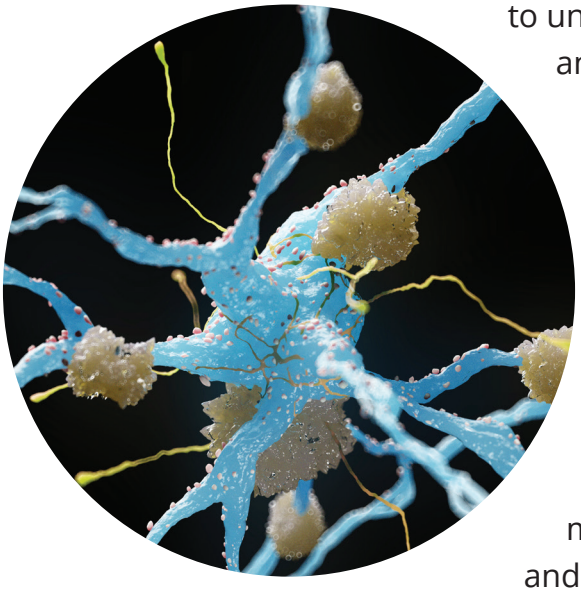
NIA Mission

- Support and conduct genetic, biological, clinical, behavioral, social, and economic research on aging.
- Foster the development of research and clinician scientists in aging.
- Provide research resources.
- Disseminate information about aging and advances in research to the public, health care professionals, and the scientific community.

Alzheimer's and Related Dementias Initiatives

Recent increases in funding for Alzheimer's and related dementias research have helped advance scientific growth and discovery to improve the diagnosis, treatment, and care of those living with dementia. NIA-supported scientists are identifying and testing new

drug candidates, advancing comprehensive models of care, developing new biomarker tests, exploring disease risk and protective factors throughout the life course that might serve as targets for preventive interventions, examining disparities in dementia prevalence and care, and improving the understanding of the role of genetics and other disease mechanisms. Other initiatives include national efforts to recruit and retain a broad range of clinical trial participants, including those from diverse communities, and to expand and diversify the Alzheimer's and related dementias research workforce.



NIA is currently funding more than 200 clinical studies, some of which are testing drug candidates that target many different aspects of the disease, some of which are focused on dementia care and caregiving, and others investigating preventive behavioral and lifestyle interventions. In addition, NIA leads the NIH Accelerating Medicines Partnership-Alzheimer's Disease (AMP-AD) program, which is an effort to bring the best and brightest minds from the public and private sectors together to find answers and ultimately effective preventions and treatments. AMP-AD projects are currently exploring disease signatures known as biomarkers and working to identify and validate potential treatments or drug targets before they are tested in people.

Healthy Aging Initiatives

NIA conducts and funds research to explore strategies or treatments to prevent, delay, or slow age-related diseases. NIA also supports the NIH Geroscience Interest Group (GSIG), which leads efforts to understand the molecular and cellular mechanisms responsible for aging as a major driver of common chronic conditions and diseases, and the Trans-NIH Science of Behavior Change (SOBC) Program, which uses a systematic approach to discovering the underlying mechanisms, i.e., "the how and the why," behind changing a person's behavior.

NIA Divisions and Programs

Intramural Research Program (IRP)

Researchers working in the institute's Baltimore and Bethesda, Maryland, laboratories have a central goal of improving understanding of age-related changes in physiology and the ability to adapt to environmental stress through three areas of focus:

- **Neuroscience**
- **Aging biology**
- **Translational gerontology**

IRP scientists conduct research that ranges from basic science to clinical research and epidemiology. The IRP is home to the world's

longest-running study of human aging, the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging. Additionally, in collaboration with the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIA will formally launch the NIH Center for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (CARD) in 2021.

Supported Research

Most NIA-supported research is led by scientists at universities, hospitals, medical centers, and private organizations across the country. The institute's extensive research portfolio and scientific training opportunities are managed by four research divisions:

- **The Division of Aging Biology** supports molecular, cellular, and genetic research on the mechanisms of aging and lifespan. It also leads animal and banked-tissue resource facilities for use in aging research and two intervention testing programs.
- **The Division of Behavioral and Social Research** supports social, behavioral, and economic research on the processes of aging — including efforts to better understand Alzheimer's and related dementias — at both the individual and societal levels.
- **The Division of Geriatrics and Clinical Gerontology** supports clinical and translational research on health and disease in older adults as well as on age-related changes over the human lifespan that affect the ability to lead longer, healthier lives.
- **The Division of Neuroscience** supports collaborative research and training to further the understanding of neural and behavioral processes associated with the aging brain. Research on dementia — in particular, Alzheimer's and related dementias — is a top priority.

Through these divisions, NIA supports a variety of collaborative research center initiatives nationwide, including:

- **Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers**
- **Centers on the Demography and Economics of Aging**
- **Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Centers**
- **Edward R. Roybal Centers for Translation Research in the Behavioral and Social Sciences of Aging**
- **Nathan Shock Centers of Excellence in the Basic Biology of Aging**
- **Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research**

The NIA Research Centers Collaborative Network supports these centers' research efforts by fostering collaboration among the centers through diverse strategies, including development of collaborative tools, conferences, pilot programs, and early career investigator support.

In addition, through its Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, NIA offers funding opportunities to commercialize products that address aging and aging-related diseases and conditions, Alzheimer's and related dementias, and the special challenges and needs of older Americans.

Response to COVID-19

NIA joined others at the NIH as well as the broader research community to respond as rapidly as possible to the COVID-19 pandemic. NIA provided guidance to its currently supported researchers and swiftly developed new funding opportunities for research on understanding the particular effects of the virus on older adult populations. There is a particular focus on underrepresented populations and those with chronic conditions or other vulnerabilities.

Training and Career Development

To engage a next generation of aging-focused scientists, NIA prioritizes the **training and career development** of researchers from diverse backgrounds at all career stages. These and related NIH programs provide opportunities to help junior faculty, new and early stage investigators, and mid-career investigators build careers in aging

research. Training opportunities also serve to increase diversity in the research workforce and offer the chance to learn onsite in NIA's IRP labs. The Butler-Williams Scholars Program focuses on health disparities and provides opportunities for junior faculty and researchers new to the field of aging to gain insight about NIA programs.

Research Resources

NIA provides numerous **research resources**, samples, and datasets to support research on aging and Alzheimer's and related dementias, including:

- Clinical research resources, such as the Alzheimer's & Dementia Outreach, Recruitment & Engagement Resources (ADORE), a searchable database that provides researchers and clinicians with tools to boost recruitment and retention efforts, including participation of diverse populations.
- Biological resources such as the Aged Rodent Colonies and related Tissue Bank, or those contained in the AgingResearchBiobank, which provides an inventory system for storage and distribution of biocollections from landmark studies of human aging.
- Data resources for behavioral and social research on aging, including publicly available data from longitudinal studies (e.g., the Health and Retirement Study), as well as harmonization projects, archives, and repositories including the National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging and the Gateway to Global Aging Data.
- Access to data from NIA's long-running intramural studies, including the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging (BLSA) and the Health, Aging, and Body Composition (HealthABC) study.
- Research databases, such as the Alzheimer's Preclinical Efficiency Database (AlzPED), a searchable platform for data sharing and analysis from published and unpublished studies.
- The National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center (NACC), which offers a central location of data sets collected from ADRC's from across the U.S. NACC data are available to all researchers, and NACC research scientists provide consulting at no charge.

Learn more at **www.nia.nih.gov/research/resources**.

For More Information

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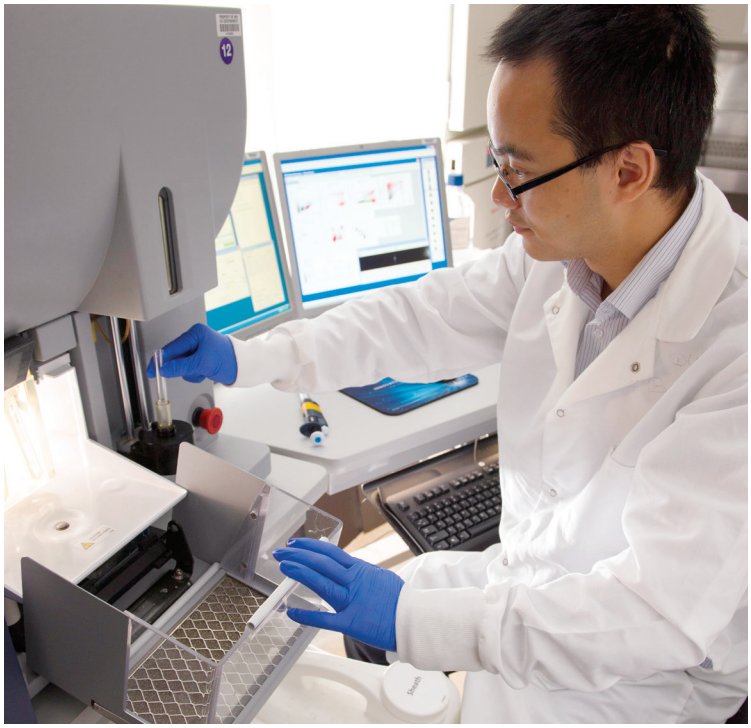

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