



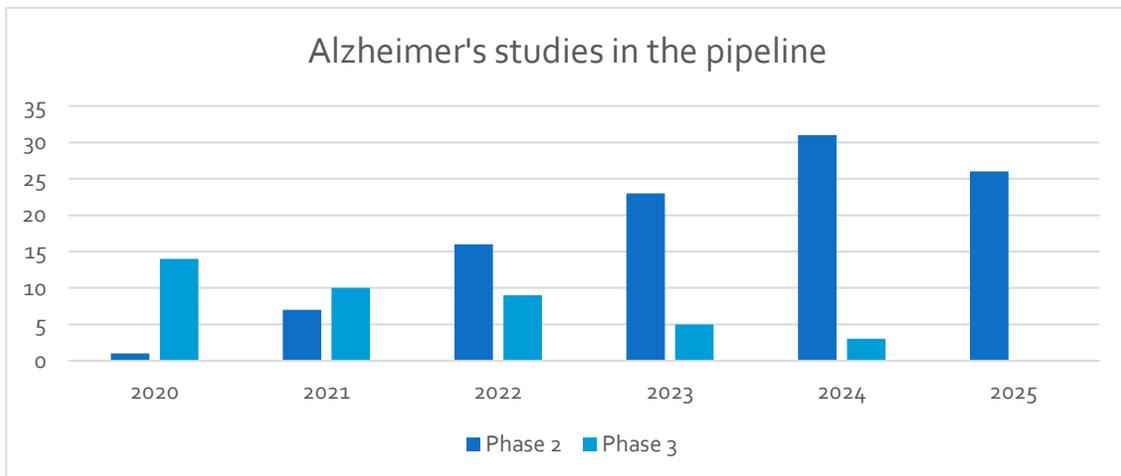
# The Compass Clinic Times

Fall 2020

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## Alzheimer's Association International Conference 2020 Highlights

- New research suggests that flu and pneumonia vaccinations are associated with a reduce risk of Alzheimer's Disease. Two studies of older adults found that those who received the fu vaccine more regularly had an even lower risk.
- Research has produced advances in blood tests that may more easily and accurately detect Alzheimer's disease with greater certainty and distinguish it from other degenerative brain disorders. The tests can detect abnormal versions of tau proteins, to include p-tau 217, which seems to be the most specific to Alzheimer's Disease.
- Currently, studies looking at p-tau 217 in the blood have been able to separate those with amyloid plaques and tau fibrillary tangles from those without, with 98% accuracy. The blood tests were compared to tau PET scan and demonstrated 93% accuracy. These findings, if replicated in a larger population, suggests that a blood test can be considered a biomarker, confirmatory test, not requiring brain autopsy or amyloid and tau PET scans.
- Heart health risk factors such as HTN, diabetes, and obesity as early as adolescence can influence late-life memory and cognition, especially in African Americans. One study of more than 700 African Americans showed that high blood pressure and diabetes or a combination of multiple heart health-related factors, are common in adolescence and are associated with worse late-life cognition.
- Higher quality early-life education is associated with better language and memory performance and lower risk of late-life dementia. A study of over 5,000 older adults suggests that higher body mass index in early adulthood (20-49) is associated with higher late-life dementia risk. In a diverse group of more than 2,400 people followed up to 21 years, higher quality early-life education was associated with better language and memory performance, and lower risk of late-life dementia.



## COMMUNITY CORNER

### Lewy Body Support Group

Has gone virtual. Offering meetings weekly for patients and caregivers separately. Art enrichment programs too!  
Contact for More Info: Sue Bouder, 914-589-2004, sb4spirit@aol.com

### Alzheimer's & Dementia Resource Center

[www.adrccares.org](http://www.adrccares.org), 407-436-7750  
Affiliated with Brain Bank, see website for more info.

### Alzheimer's Association - [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

### Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADEAR)

National Institute on Aging  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers)



### Current Trial Count

#### Alzheimer's Disease:

Disease modifying, symptomatic and agitation trials: 7

#### Parkinson's Disease:

Disease modifying and symptomatic trials: 1

ALS: 1

Prevention Trial: 1

### New Medication for Insomnia in Alzheimer's Disease

In February, Merck received FDA approval to extend indication of Belsomra, an orexin receptor antagonist, for use in Mild to Moderate Alzheimer's Disease (MMSE 12-26). Of 285 patients (142 received drug, 143 received placebo) that started the study, 97% completed the study after 4 weeks. 71% of patients were over age 65. Treatment revealed statistically significant increase in total sleep time and wake after sleep onset. Disruptions in sleep-wake pattern and overall sleep cycle is common in Alzheimer's Disease.

## A Message from Dr. Goodman

Hope all are staying healthy and safe. There is encouraging news that very rapid advances are continuing for the development and distribution of vaccines and treatments to finally end this pandemic.

Concerning clinical research for the neurodegenerative diseases that we treat here in the Compass Clinic, there also have been dramatic new developments. With the resurgence that clearing amyloid out of the brain in people with probable AD is indeed a good target, there is a new "prevention trial" using a monoclonal antibody to clear amyloid out of the brain in pre-symptomatic individuals. At this time, aducanumab, a monoclonal antibody to amyloid, is being reviewed by the FDA as we speak to offer people with symptomatic probable AD.

Likewise, a new PET scan (TAUVID) that identifies the second signature protein of Alzheimer's pathology, tau protein, has recently been FDA approved. This scan will prove to be a valuable biomarker to help us with diagnosis but also possibly how well our treatments for disease modification are working. There is a much stronger correlation between the presence of tau protein to the clinical picture than the presence of amyloid protein. Indeed, we are now conducting specific trials to remove tau.

Looking ahead, we are now entering the world of gene therapy for the neurodegenerative diseases with three gene therapy trials in the pipeline that I will be Principle Investigator. These studies involve introduction of trillions of genes carried in safe virus particles which introduces the new gene into the brain cell. The "vector gene" is introduced into the spinal fluid thus avoiding direct administration into the brain in a technique similar to a spinal tap.