

MCCFAD NEWS

MICHIGAN CENTER FOR CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN ALZHEIMERS DISEASE



THE MIDDLE STAGE OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

The Middle Stage of Alzheimer's disease (AD) is typically the longest stage of the disease. Symptoms become more evident as the disease progresses, and may include: confusion of words, getting more frustrated or angry, and changes in behaviors. There might be an increase in the tendency to wander or changes in personality. Whatever changes come in this stage, it's important to note that the person living with AD may still be able to participate in daily activities but need more assistance. When caring for a family member with AD, it is essential to seek out support from other family members or friends or potentially consider respite care for a couple of hours a day or an adult day center.

To learn more about the middle stage and how to best prepare, please visit: www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/middle-stage.

If you are looking for more support in your community, please contact us today:

Ana Ramos, amramos@alz.org, 616-459-7423

Donna Jawad, djawad@alz.org, 313- 605-8933

DIRECTORS' NOTE

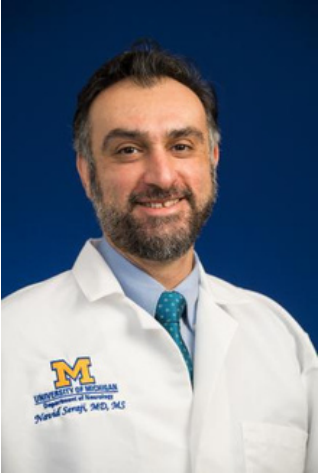
Kristine Ajrouch, PhD
Toni Antonucci, PhD
Laura Zahodne, PhD

There is much to celebrate at the Michigan Center for Contextual Factors in Alzheimer's Disease (MCCFAD)! We are pleased to share that the National Institute on Aging recently reviewed and renewed MCCFAD to continue our efforts to bring the latest and greatest information about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ARD) to you all.

Dr. Wassim Tarraf joined our team to lead efforts in the Arab/Middle Eastern communities, and Dr. Irving Vega is back to lead efforts in the Latino communities along with our incredible outreach coordinators, Donna Jawad and Ana Ramos. Exciting programs are coming to your community this year. We invite you to join us to learn more about ARD, how to reduce risk and to best care for those living with dementia. See you at the next community event!

LATEST IN TREATMENTS AND CLINICAL TRIALS

Navid Seraji-Bozorgzad, MD

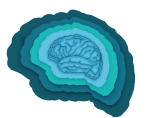


The hallmark of Alzheimer's disease is the abnormal accumulation, or clumping, of proteins in the brain. The two proteins that are linked to Alzheimer's disease are beta-amyloid and tau. The clumps of beta-amyloid form plaques, and the tau protein accumulates as tangles. As plaques and tangles build up, the brain cells start to lose their normal function, followed by difficulties with memory and thinking. Despite decades of research into what happens in the brain of people living with Alzheimer's disease, medications that remove the plaques from the brain cells have not been successful in slowing down the disease progression, until recently.

In July of 2023, the FDA gave full approval to lecanemab (Leqembi®) (<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-converts-novel-alzheimers-disease-treatment-traditional-approval>), a bi-weekly intravenous infusion that is given to patients in early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Lecanemab is far from an ideal treatment: it has significant side effects, requires close monitoring, and does not reverse or even stop the progression of the disease. Nonetheless, it is the first medication that has shown convincing evidence of slowing down the progression of the disease (<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2212948>).

Soon after the approval of Lecanemab, encouraging results from another medication that targets the beta-amyloid plaques were reported. Donanemab is also an intravenous medication that when given to patients in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease slows its progression. For some patients, their symptoms did not worsen over the period of one year of Donanemab treatment (Journal of the American Medical Association). Like Lecanemab, Donanemab can have rare but serious side effects, including brain hemorrhage, and requires close monitoring with repeated brain imaging (MRI scans).

The recent success of anti-amyloid therapy is a welcome change from decades of setbacks in research for effective treatments. We expect to see the results of more clinical trials by the end of the year, including some oral medication testing that target tau tangles. As we make progress toward finding treatments for Alzheimer's disease, the importance of prevention through lifestyle choices, and early detection remains our best defense against this ravaging disease. Prevention is still better than cure.



KEEPING YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY

SUDOKU

The rules for sudoku are simple. A 9x9 square must be filled in with numbers from 1-9 with no repeated numbers in each line, horizontally or vertically.

	7			2			4	6	
	6						8	9	
2				8			7	1	5
	8	4		9	7				
7	1						5	9	
				1	3		4	8	
6	9	7			2			8	
	5	8					6		
4	3			8			7		

Answer Key:

4	3	2	5	8	6	9	7	1
1	5	8	3	7	9	2	6	4
6	9	7	4	1	2	5	3	8
9	2	6	1	3	5	4	8	7
7	1	3	2	4	8	6	5	9
5	8	4	6	9	7	1	2	3
2	4	9	8	6	3	7	1	5
3	6	1	7	5	4	8	9	2
8	7	5	9	2	1	3	4	6

Healthy Eating

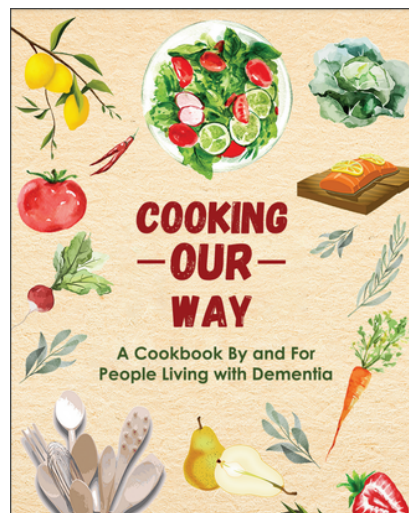


Start your morning with a **Beginner's Luck Green Smoothie**, the recipe can be found at the link below:

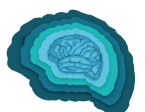
bit.ly/3PMAQUz



BOOK RECOMMENDATION



Cooking Our Way
A Cookbook By and For People Living with Dementia
By: Karen Love



COMMUNITY PARTNER BOARD MEMBERS 2023-2028

COMMUNITY PARTNER BOARD

MCCFAD encourages an active role for community members through the Community Partner Board. Members advise on the integration of research results into practice, the development of culturally sensitive measures, ensuring respect for the values, culture, and social practices of each community, and ensuring our communities benefit from research. They also partner with MCCFAD to ensure diverse groups are included in MCCFAD activities.

Our Community Partner Boards from the Arab/Middle Eastern and Latino communities gathered in late August for a joint retreat to discuss lessons learned and future direction for MCCFAD activities over the next five years.



Pictured left to right: Rania Nunu, Melanie Baird, Claudia Halberg, Noelia Garcia, Alejandra Meza, Joy Spahn, Rosemary Peralta, and Jackie Raxter

ARAB/MIDDLE EASTERN COMMUNITY PARTNER BOARD MEMBERS:

Melanie Baird, Vice President of Programs, Alzheimer's Association GMC

Mona Makki, Director, ACCESS Community Health and Research Center

Rania Nunu, Translator and ESL Teacher

Jackie M. Raxter, MA, LMSW, LPC, Behavioral Health Program Manager, Chaldean Community Foundation

Nadiya Samhat, Retired Special Education Teacher

Sara Soofi, Pediatric psychometric Coordinator and Clinical Psychologist

Maryana Yousif, LLMSW, American Chaldean Council

LATINO COMMUNITY PARTNER BOARD MEMBERS:

Teresa Cruz-Vega, Community School Coordinator, Kent Count School Services Network

Noelia Garcia, Senior Services Project Supervisor, Kent County Community Access

Claudia Hallberg, Career Advisor, Telamon Corporation

Alejandra Meza, Director of Programs, Hispanic Center of Western Michigan

Rosemary Peralta, Community Health Worker, Exalta Health

Zayda Rodriguez, Health Educator, Molina Healthcare

Joy Spahn, Retired Regional Director, Alzheimer's Association

Lea Tobar, Retired Educator, Grand Rapids Public schools

MCCFAD Corner

Meet the Researchers

DR. MÓNIKA LÓPEZ ANUARBE

Dr. Mónica López Anuarbe is an Associate Professor of Economics at Connecticut College. She is a health and inequality economist who has long been interested in aging, caregiving equity, and health disparities. Her research project with MCCFAD seeks to understand the patterns of economic healthcare costs for Mexicans living in their country as a majority population, compared to being a majority-minority (i.e. an ethnic minority outnumbering the majority or White population) or a minority group in the United States. This project also studies how personal characteristics, geographical region, birthplace, and majority/minority status affect these economic healthcare costs.



DR. DANA ALHASAN

Dr. Dana Alhasan is an Assistant Professor in Public Health Sciences at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Her research agenda is centered around identifying social and physical features of the neighborhood environment related to cognitive disorders, cardiometabolic diseases, and health behaviors. Her goal is to reduce and mitigate health disparities. Her work centers on historically marginalized and understudied populations, particularly in the South and rural areas. Dr. Alhasan's MCCFAD research project aims to fill the gap in racial/ethnic diversity in neighborhood research by understanding the experience of Arab Americans in their neighborhood environment in relation to a perceived risk of ADRD.



PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Join our research Volunteer Directory
to join the fight against Alzheimer's
and related dementias

Scan the QR Code to get started:



Discover the National Council of Dementia Minds: A Community of Strength and Inclusion

Written by: Brenda Roberts



We are pleased to introduce you to a groundbreaking organization that is revolutionizing the way we perceive dementia: the National Council of Dementia Minds (NCDM). Founded and led by individuals living with dementia, NCDM is dedicated to embracing life with dementia, together.

Our experiences with dementia are as diverse as our backgrounds. Through NCDM, we've created a space where our stories aren't just heard, they're cherished. It's a place where we gather to share, listen, and lift each other up.

NCDM's story began with a powerful realization - we needed a platform to speak for ourselves, where our voices wouldn't just be acknowledged but celebrated. As the first national nonprofit founded and governed by persons living with dementia, we're breaking new ground.

We believe in the strength of diversity and inclusion. By sharing our experiences, we aim to foster understanding and empathy. Together, we're breaking down walls and building bridges of connection.

Through NCDM, we're not just building friendships, we're creating a web of support that brings purpose and meaning back into our lives. It's a journey marked by growth, empowerment, and renewed hope. And that's not all. NCDM offers a treasure trove of resources. We have peer support groups where we learn from each other's triumphs and challenges.

We share strategies for not just coping but thriving with dementia. And we provide educational opportunities for our families, friends, and professionals to learn how best to support us.

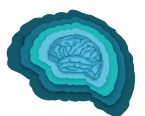
Visit www.DementiaMinds.org or call Brenda Roberts at (989) 330-0290 to learn more about NCDM and how you can be part of this transformative movement. We're on this journey together, embracing life with all its challenges and joys.

Why the dragonfly logo?

For centuries, the dragonfly has been a symbol of change and self-realization. It represents hope, happiness, adaptability, and new beginnings.

If you have a story you would like to share: email
Donna Jawad at donjawad@umich.edu or Ana Ramos at amramos@alz.org

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