

Collaboration among TARCC institutions has resulted in a unique resource, the Texas Harris Alzheimer's Research Study, a large standardized research database of well characterized subjects. To date, TARCC has enrolled more than 2000 subjects into this longitudinal research study, which consists of patients diagnosed with AD and mild cognitive impairment, as well as healthy controls. A novel and important strength of TARCC is the longitudinal nature of this study, where subjects are followed annually and standardized clinical, neuropsychiatric, and genetic, and blood biomarker data and samples are collected. Analysis of the longitudinal data set enables TARCC investigators to model changes in cognitive function over time, allowing identification of factors that affect not only risk, but disease progression. The inclusion of individuals diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment is useful for understanding the sequence of neurodegenerative changes that occur as AD develops. Another unique strength of TARCC is the enrollment of the largest number of Mexican-American participants in an ongoing Alzheimer's disease research study. Mexican-Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in Texas and are projected to represent a majority of the state's population by 2020. Very little is known about AD in this population.

TARCC, the first, multi-institutional state-funded collaborative research initiative in Texas, has led to the establishment of a large standardized research cohort. The wealth of information contained in the Texas Harris Alzheimer's Research Study facilitates collaborative AD research projects among TARCC member institutions as well as stimulates novel, basic, and clinical research that furthers our understanding of AD. TARCC is also an invaluable resource to national AD research efforts because of the longitudinal nature of the data collected, the inclusion of Mexican-Americans, as well as the availability of genetic and biomarker samples.

Although a number of significant research developments have already resulted from analysis of the Texas Harris Alzheimer's Research Study data, wider utilization of this unique resource by a diverse group of AD researchers, both in Texas and across the nation, will advance AD research efforts. The Texas Harris Alzheimer's Research Study uniquely positions Texas to contribute to research efforts which will lead to better diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of AD.