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TEXAS RESEARCHERS ANNOUNCE BREAKTHROUGH IN ALZHEIMER'S DETECTION

New Procedure Allows Diagnosis with Simple Blood Test

HONOLULU – Scientists of the Texas Alzheimer's Research Consortium (TARC) today announced a landmark breakthrough in the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease: the creation of a simple blood test. The results, presented at the International Convention on Alzheimer's Disease (ICAD) in Hawaii, could facilitate the early detection and treatment of this devastating condition.

Current state-of-the-art methods for diagnosis of Alzheimer's are time consuming, expensive, and still less than 100% accurate. Previous efforts to develop a blood test for detecting the condition have largely failed. Based upon research funded by TARC, its scientists have developed an inexpensive test measuring blood proteins that accurately classify 95% of those with or without the disease.

TARC's findings were presented at ICAD by Dr. Ramon Diaz-Arrastia of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and member of the TARC Genetics Subcommittee. Diaz-Arrastia says TARC's presentation could be one of the highlights of this year's convention, "ICAD is the premier scientific forum for presentation of the most exciting research on Alzheimer's disease. This year's meeting reflects the progress in the field and the ongoing research sponsored through TARC is in the thick of this exciting international effort."

The research leading to the new blood test was conducted by Dr. Sid O'Bryant of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and member of the TARC Steering Committee. O'Bryant was unable to attend ICAD due to the anticipated birth of his second daughter but, from Lubbock, expressed great enthusiasm about the breakthrough and the work of TARC, "Texas has taken a huge step towards advancing the understanding of Alzheimer's disease, and I predict that we will generate more accurate methods for estimating risk for this disease - and even identify subgroups of Alzheimer's patients that may guide updated treatment options. Once validated, this blood-test could be the most significant advancement in geriatric medicine in decades."

The breakthrough research was made possible by monies from TARC, funded by the State of Texas since 2005 to coordinate and catalyze cutting-edge Alzheimer's research within the state. Today's announcement was hailed by state leaders as a demonstration of the Consortium's value.

More than 340,000 Texans over the age of 65 suffer from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. That number is projected to grow to nearly half a million by 2025. In addition to the human cost of Alzheimer's, there is a significant economic cost to Texans as well. In 2009, the value of unpaid care for Texas Alzheimer's and dementia patients was estimated at \$11.2 billion.

TARC scientists are continuing work to further develop their discovery. Made possible by research conducted by TARC scientists using TARC funds, the State of Texas will own the patent on any eventual commercially available blood test derived from this research.



The Texas Alzheimer's Research Consortium (TARC) is a unique, cutting-edge collaboration between five of the state's leading medical research institutions, including Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, and the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth, to improve early diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of Alzheimer's disease. For more information, please visit www.txalzresearch.org

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