COMMUNITY OUTREACH

African-American Dementia Outreach Partnership

The African-American Dementia Outreach Partnership (AADOP) Advisory Council is a group of diverse individuals committed to increasing awareness, education, and services throughout the community. The council includes clergy members, representatives from the Alzheimer's Association, the Bluegrass Area Agency on Aging, Sanders-Brown Alzheimer's Disease Center, the Community Action Council, and community members. AADOP’s mission is to provide compassion, guidance, and support to families within the African-American community who are affected by memory loss through increasing awareness, providing early diagnostic services, providing information about research opportunities, and increasing enrollment in appropriate research studies. AADOP provides:

- Educational material
- Caregiver workshops in conjunction with the Alzheimer’s Association and Baptist Health
- Presentations on Healthy Aging, Signs of Memory Loss, and Staying Sharp

"The "Book of Alzheimer’s for African-American Churches"
"Granny Pearl" – a youth educational DVD and tool kit
Memory Sunday tool kit – Clergy guides for educating congregations on memory loss

Free Memory Screenings
859.218.3867
859.323.5550

For more community outreach information visit:
www.uky.edu/coa/adc

FEEDBACK
We welcome your feedback on:
Questions or comments regarding the current issue;
Ideas for future newsletter content or corrections
Contact Paula Thomason:
paula.thomason@uky.edu

Please Join Us

UK SANDERS-BROWN CENTER ON AGING FOUNDATION
28th Annual Dinner
Thursday, April 23, 2015
Cocktail Reception 6:30pm
Dinner and Program 7:30pm
Lexington Center Bluegrass Ballroom

An Evening with Coach Matthew Mitchell

Kentucky head coach Matthew Mitchell’s teams are known for using three “winning tools” for success: honesty, hard work and discipline. So it’s no surprise that Mitchell is UK’s all-time winningest coach and year after year he assembles teams that are synonymous with winning on and off the court. In the last five seasons, UK has advanced to a school-record five consecutive NCAA tournaments, including three Elite Eight and four Sweet 16 appearances. Mitchell’s teams have brought excitement for women’s basketball in the Bluegrass like never before. Join us as we welcome Coach Mitchell in supporting Sanders-Brown Center on Aging efforts to improve quality of life of aging people and their families.

Proceeds from the dinner will fund internationally recognized, ongoing research at the Sanders-Brown Center on Aging, where researchers are engaged in the battle against Alzheimer’s disease and other age-related brain disorders. In addition to research, funds are used to help with education, outreach and clinical programs throughout the center.

Put me on the team!
For more information call 859-323-5374 or email lisa.greer@uky.edu. Sponsorship opportunities, group and individual seating are available.
common question that we get asked is, "Why study the brain after someone dies?" Brain donation is an important and integral part of our research efforts at the center. When one of our research volunteers passes, we try to transport them to the autopsy suite as quickly as possible, usually within 3-4 hours. Using a unique procedure, which allows public viewing at funerals, the brain is removed and carefully examined.

Our rapid autopsy research team (Drs. Pete Nelson and Steve Scheff) follows a standardized procedure to study different regions of the brain in explicit detail. One of the primary questions we try to answer is whether or not the individual's mental status at the end of life can be associated with changes in the brain. We all realize that an individual's ability to learn, remember and recognize the world around us is the result of the proper functioning of our brain and central nervous system. When an individual has memory problems, such as Alzheimer's disease, this can be related to pathology in the brain. The only way to know for sure if an individual had Alzheimer's disease is to carefully perform a detailed study of different brain regions. This allows us to rule out other possible reasons for cognitive decline.

Many samples from regions of the brain that we collect at autopsy are utilized by other researchers in hopes of unlocking some of the mysteries involved in not only Alzheimer's disease but also normal aging. For example, why is it some individuals have cognitive problems when they are in their 70s and others appear to be mentally sharp in their 90s? To answer questions such as these, we need to study human brain tissue using many different types of techniques, some of which evaluate the molecular and cellular structure of the nervous system. Often these studies require brain tissue obtained within 3 hours after death. In one such study, we evaluated changes in brain connectivity in different regions of cortex that we know are involved in Alzheimer's disease. In this particular study, we specifically measured the number of synapses in the frontal cortex.

Synapses are the tiny connections that neurons use to communicate with each other. It is these tiny connections that allow the brain to not only make sense of things we feel, see, and hear but also allow us to recall past experiences and give each individual a unique personality. What we have determined from some of our autopsy brain donations is that the number of synapses in the frontal cortex does not always decline in advanced aging and that the idea the brain simply atrophies or shrinks with aging is not necessarily true for all parts of the brain. When an individual shows advanced atrophy, it is probably the result of a disease process such as Alzheimer's disease. Our studies clearly demonstrate that the number of synapses you possess directly correlates with your global mental status. What this means is that we should do whatever we can to protect these synapses and try to make more. Many researchers are working on that exact problem - how to make more synapses. This type of research is possible because of brain autopsy programs such as ours.