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PENN MEDICINE'S *VIRTUAL 5K* FOR THE IOA

While the COVID-19 pandemic may have put a pause on many events, it didn't stop Penn Medicine from creatively - and most importantly, safely - hosting their annual 5K for the IOA.

Nearly 119 participants in and around Philadelphia and beyond joined in and shared their virtual #MyIOA5K experience walking, running, biking, etc. to help raise over $23,000 for Alzheimer's and aging-related research at Penn's Institute on Aging.

VACUOLAR TAUOPATHY: NEW, RARE GENETIC FORM OF DEMENTIA *discovered at Penn Medicine*

Penn Medicine researchers have discovered a new, rare genetic form of dementia - a discovery that is shedding light on a new pathway that leads to protein build-up in the brain.

This build-up of protein is not only responsible for the newly discovered disease, **Vacuolar Tauopathy (VT)**, but it is also the cause of related neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's disease as well.

"Rare genetic forms of disease often allow us to have insights into the mechanisms that cause more prevalent, common sporadic diseases - or non-genetic diseases," said lead author, Edward Lee, MD, PhD, assistant professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

The hope is that these findings could be targeted for new therapeutic treatments for VT and other neurodegenerative diseases.

VIRGINIA M.-Y. LEE, PHD, NAMED ONE OF *The 76 Most Influential People in Philadelphia*

Penn Medicine's Virginia M.-Y. Lee, PhD, Director of the Center for Neurodegenerative Disease Research (CNDR), was named one of the "The 76 Most Influential People in Philadelphia" in the latest issue of *Philadelphia Magazine*.

Dr. Lee was recognized not only for her outstanding contributions to the field of neurodegenerative disease research, including the discovery the proteins that lead to progression in Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and other dementias and movement disorders like ALS which helps pave the way for better potential treatments, but also for receiving the prestigious 2020 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences.

Dr. Lee was among several Penn-affiliates featured in the article, including University of Pennsylvania president, Amy Gutmann, and University of Pennsylvania Health System CEO Kevin Mahoney.

THE RIGHT TO VOTE *Helping the cognitively impaired participate in the election*

As we find ourselves in the midst of what may be one of the most highly anticipated elections to date, exercising your right to vote is more important now than ever. While many American's are faced with disabilities that make heading to the polls a bit of a challenge, absentee and mail-in ballots are easy ways to make sure their voices are still heard. However, for people with cognitive impairments such as dementia, it is not always that simple. Many people think that dementia instantly disqualifies a person from being capable of voting, but that is simply not true.

There are many misperceptions about what "capacity to vote" is, but it really comes down to one true requirement: the ability to express a preference. "Can you pick among the choices?" explains Jason Karlawish, MD, geriatrician and Co-director of the Penn Memory Center. "That's it."

When assisting someone with dementia to vote, there are two main guidelines to follow once the voting process begins:

1.) Inform the person that election day is nearing and ask them if they would like to vote. If they answer "no," then the process stops there. If they answer "yes," then you may proceed.

2.) Read the person the ballot choices, if he or she cannot read it themselves, but provide no further information. Ask them their choices and see if they answer. If they do, then cast their vote. Write-ins are also accepted and must be respected -- even if their choice sounds strange.

NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

University of Pennsylvania Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Developmental Project

The University of Pennsylvania Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) will fund up to two developmental projects in the 2021-2022 academic year, pending availability of funds, to support basic, translational or clinical research within the theme of heterogeneity in the Alzheimer's Disease (AD) continuum.

Visit the IOA website for more information including the RFA:
www.med.upenn.edu/aging/funding.html

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