Local research on dementia 2011

Serum biomarkers

A range of studies are underway to investigate whether biomarkers of factors such as vitamin D deficiency and adipokine levels predict people’s subsequent risk of cognitive decline and dementia. It is hoped that this approach will identify new potentially modifiable risk factors with therapeutic potential.


Genetics

We are collaborating with international consortia to conduct genome-wide association studies to reveal new risk loci associated with Alzheimer’s disease and aspects of cognitive function. We are also conducting an in-vivo genome-wide study of leukocyte transcript levels by microarray analysis in relation to cognitive function.


Vascular imaging

Local clinical studies such as ECHO-PIV are being conducted in Exeter bringing together novel vascular imaging technologies and cognitive assessments in a range of patient groups. We have also recently been joined by Prof Nitin Purandare who also has expertise in vascular imaging and has published extensively on the role of cerebral emboli in dementia.


**Health services research**

Work being carried out under the auspices of the NIHR PenCLAHRC (Peninsula Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care) deals with the implementation and evaluation of services for people with dementia and their supporters. Projects underway include a PhD study of ways to support families and friends to identify early signs of dementia and take act on their concerns; a community-based evaluation of local peer-led dementia support groups; and a study investigating ways of engaging people with dementia and memory loss in identifying and prioritising research questions.


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