

\$4.8M Grant to Study Alzheimer's in Black Adults

Researchers aim to develop strategies for early detection as well as more effective treatment options for middle-aged adults.

November 26, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Researchers at North Carolina Agricultural Technical State University's (NC A&T) Center for Outreach in Alzheimer's, Aging and Community Health (COAACH) received a five-year, \$4.8 million grant to study [Alzheimer's disease](#) in middle-aged Black Americans, according to a [university news release](#).

Nearly seven million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, a type of [dementia](#) that affects memory, thinking and behavior. Overall, Black adults are almost twice as likely as white adults to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's, according to the [Alzheimer's Association](#). More than 21% of Black Americans ages 70 and older are living with Alzheimer's.

Provided by the National Institutes of Health, the grant will support a research study titled "The Black American United Memory and Aging Project (BA-UMAP): An Examination of Cognitive Decline in Mid-life & Older Black Adults."

The study will involve 600 Black participants ages 55 and older and will examine the biopsychological factors that impact cognitive outcomes, according to study leader Travonia Brown-Hughes, PhD, COAACH director and associate professor in NC A&T's College of Science and Technology.

A [2020 study found](#) that about 210,000 North Carolinians were living with Alzheimer's, but, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, "as few as half of the individuals meeting the criteria for dementia are diagnosed, and as such, the number of North Carolinians living with dementia may be higher."

Many Black adults are unaware of Alzheimer's symptoms, according [to a recent study](#). What's

more, only about 48% of Black people report feeling confident that they can access culturally competent health care. Most Black people want to do more to support healthy aging and have better access to education and resources to do so. Indeed, nearly 80% reported experiencing barriers to proper care and support for the disease.

“The time has come for us to move beyond hoping for a way to prevent, stop or cure Alzheimer’s disease,” Brown-Hughes said in the news release. “Amid broader calls for social justice, greater strides must be made to eliminate discrimination and other forms of bias to ensure all Americans have access to high-quality dementia care and support services and opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, Alzheimer’s research.”

To read more, click [#Alzheimer’s Disease](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Millions of Aging Americans Are Facing Dementia by Themselves](#),” “[Alzheimer’s Disease May Damage the Brain in Two Phases](#)” and “[Blood Test Identifies Alzheimer’s Disease With About 90% Accuracy](#).”

For additional information, read Real Health’s [Basics on Alzheimer’s Disease](#). It reads in part:

What is Alzheimer’s disease?

This progressive illness affects parts of the brain that control thought, memory and language and is the most common type of dementia. Alzheimer’s can begin with mild memory loss that may lead to an individual’s inability to converse and react to the environment and can interfere with his or her ability to handle routine daily tasks.

What are the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease?

Some typical signs of Alzheimer’s include the following:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life, especially forgetting recently learned information or important dates or events;
- Changes in the ability to follow a plan or solve problems;
- Difficulty completing familiar chores, duties or work;
- Losing track of time, dates and places, resulting in confusion and uncertainty;
- Trouble reading, understanding visual images and judging distance;
- Problems speaking, repetitiveness during conversations and struggling with words;

- Misplacing objects and being unable to backtrack to find them;
- Poor judgment and decision-making and changes in mood and personality or inappropriate behavior;
- Withdrawing from work or social activities that were previously enjoyable or routine.

What are the risk factors for Alzheimer's disease?

According to scientists, the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's is advancing age, as most individuals with the disease are ages 65 or older. In addition, after age 85, the risk of someone developing the illness jumps to almost 50%. Other strong risk factors include family history and heredity. Also, scientists have uncovered some risk factors linked to Alzheimer's that people can control, such as serious and repetitive head injuries and suffering damages to the heart or blood vessels from high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and elevated cholesterol levels.

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<http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/48m-grant-study-alzheimers-black-adults>