Beginning in January 2013, the MURDOCK Study team will implement a new strategy for recruiting local residents. Since its start in 2009, the MURDOCK Study has added more than 9,000 residents from Kannapolis, Cabarrus County, and the surrounding regions into its Community Registry and Biorepository. Because of volunteers like you, participation in the study has increased steadily. Numerous outreach opportunities continue to increase our visibility within the community; however, as we move toward our goal of 50,000 enrolled individuals, we seek to build a registry that accurately reflects the characteristics of the region based on attributes like sex, age, race, and ethnicity.

Guided by input from several nationally renowned epidemiologists (individuals who study the causes and control of disease as well as the distribution of disease in populations) and with thoughtful consideration by the MURDOCK Study leadership team, the MURDOCK Study will start a pilot phase of implementing a representative sample.

So, what does that mean?

A representative sample is a subset of the total population that accurately reflects the demographics and characteristics of that population.

An estimated 15,000 volunteers will supplement the pool of participants—you—who are already enrolled in the MURDOCK Study. Our goal is to represent all of the key demographic groups of the local population, including healthy residents and residents with major diseases. This recruitment strategy will allow for study findings to be generalized across numerous population groups.

“With the continuing enrollment of self-referred volunteers, the representative sample will provide a methodological and scientific anchor for future research, and in doing so, will enhance the value of the MURDOCK Study,” said L. Kristin Newby, MD, MHS, professor of medicine at Duke University Medical Center and co-principal investigator of the MURDOCK Study Community Registry and Biorepository.

To start, the MURDOCK Study staff, managed by Project Leader for Data Management Michelle Smerek, will recruit 100 randomly selected households (approximately 180 adults) selected from 2 of the 18 zip codes from which the MURDOCK Study recruits participants (Table 1).

The goals of the pilot project, which is expected to last approximately 4 months, are to: (1) understand how the selected households respond; (2) determine how well our recruitment methods work; (3) test our marketing materials; (4) examine the characteristics of those who choose to enroll via this strategy versus those who do not; and (5) use new tools to implement this effort.

Table 1: Eligible zip codes of MURDOCK catchment region

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Has your address changed?
Please help us keep our records current by contacting our office at (704) 250-5861 or murdock-study@duke.edu.

Find us on Facebook and Twitter
“Like” us on Facebook! On Twitter, mention us (@murdocktweet) and share your MURDOCK Study experiences with your followers.

Now available! Tell your friends!
Text “MURDOCK” to (704) 935-2635 to learn how to enroll. Standard rates will apply.

continued on page 2
A New Approach to Recruiting for the MURDOCK Study: Balancing the Study’s Population Characteristics

This pilot project will provide the MURDOCK Study leadership group with the opportunity to evaluate these goals and determine how best to reach the ultimate goal of recruiting 15,000 participants from randomly selected households.

ALL individuals enrolled in the MURDOCK Study—whether you volunteered, were recruited by a local organization or physician’s office, participated in a mass enrollment event, or were identified through the representative sampling of households—are equally important in this large and promising community-based health study. We are striving to reach 50,000 members of our community and need your continued support.

Researchers in Scotland recently published a study about the correlation between seniors’ physical activity and loss of brain mass. The study used self-reported leisure and physical activity of participants in their 70s and showed that those who were more active had higher volumes of gray matter. Gray matter is the nerve tissue that includes regions of the brain involved in muscle control and sensory perception, including sight, hearing, memory, emotion, and speech. The study also confirmed that there was less brain matter decline in seniors that were on the move. (Gow A, et al. “Neuroprotective lifestyles and the aging brain: Activity, atrophy, and white matter integrity.” Neurology 2012; 79: 1802–1808.)

Translational News: Active Seniors Less Likely to Lose Brain Volume

Additional Research Opportunities Available on the North Carolina Research Campus

B.E.R.R.Y. Study: Now enrolling adults aged 65–79 years to examine the ingestion of blueberries and mild cognitive decline. For more information, call (704) 250-5018 or email feedingbrains@unc.edu.

Genetics, Nutrition, and Muscle Performance: Recruiting white men aged 18–45 years for a study that examines how genetically guided nutrition can improve muscle performance. The full study involves taking a nutrient supplement for 3 weeks, a placebo for 3 weeks, 3 workouts of 8 minutes each, and 3 blood draws. Participants will receive $10 for screening and $100 for completing the study. Email Dr. Martin Kohlmeier for more information: mkohlmeier@unc.edu.

HOT OFF THE PRESS! The MURDOCK Study team is excited to announce its newest publication. The paper, published in the American Journal of Translational Research (October 2012), discusses the local MURDOCK Study Community Registry and Biorepository that you have joined! It also presents data on the characteristics of the first 6,000 MURDOCK participants. Visit our website at www.murdock-study.org to download the full paper.

Figure 1: MURDOCK Study Community Registry Accrual, 2009–2012

Figure 2: Number of Participants in MURDOCK Substudies (Total MURDOCK Study Participants, n=8650)

The Kannapolis-based MURDOCK Study team traveled to Durham, NC to join fellow Duke colleagues at the new Duke Translational Research Institute location.

The Kannapolis-based MURDOCK Study team traveled to Durham, NC to join fellow Duke colleagues at the new Duke Translational Research Institute location.

Forest Hill UMC

Posters and presentations about the MURDOCK Study have been shared at various scientific meetings, such as:

- 2012 American Medical Informatics Association Clinical Research Informatics Summit (San Francisco, CA)
- Society for Clinical and Translational Science Annual Conference (Washington, DC)
- 5th Annual Clinical Research Management Workshop (New Haven, CT)

Dr. Richard Prosser, a local chiropractor and participant of the MURDOCK Study, volunteers at the Forest Hills United Methodist Church Latino Health Clinic (which is open on the second Sunday of each month). He is joined by Esmeralda Calderon, a translator, and Rufina Rivera. MURDOCK Study staff support the clinic as translators and recruit study participants.