Kannapolis native becomes 11,000th to join MURDOCK Study

Over 80? Join the Healthy Aging Study

A quarterly newsletter for MURDOCK Study participants

Miss World America enrolls in MURDOCK Study

A note from our principal investigator

Welcome, China Grove and Landis!
MURDOCK Study, brain banks help battle Alzheimer's disease

Duke University offers unique tools for investigators searching for clues to the devastation of memory loss.

“People often don’t realize that Alzheimer’s has been difficult to develop treatment for because there are no totally faithful animal models,” said James Burke, MD, PhD, professor of neurology and medicine at Duke University. “Animal models of Alzheimer’s disease are not found in nature. Researchers at Duke, however, have access to unique resources to study dementia: a study cohort of more than 1,500 healthy adults who are willing to have their mental processes studied over time through the MURDOCK Study, and a brain bank that includes 100 human brains donated to Duke during the past 25 years.

“With these resources, we can continue to ask the same questions that we asked 25 years ago, and we can use them to test new ideas. We can understand the factors that contribute to Alzheimer’s and to other neurodegenerative diseases,” said Burke.

MURDOCK Study investigators can study brain functions by tapping into the MURDOCK Study, which includes a subset of 1,500 enrolled participants with no documented dementia or cognitive decline. These volunteers have agreed to take cognitive tests and give blood samples periodically, providing a time-lapse view of cognitive function as well as changes to the brain.

“Our goal is to use these unique resources to validate hypotheses about the disease pathogenesis and to test new ideas,” said Burke. “The MURDOCK Study is the number one asset in our war against dementia.”

“All of the tools we have at Duke, the MURDOCK Study is the number one asset in our war against dementia, like Alzheimer’s,” said Burke. “To learn to cure dementia, we have to learn what is happening before the symptoms become obvious.”

The MURDOCK Study team is also partnering with a local high school to use data from the Duke Daily Global Health Study to determine whether a new medication will delay or prevent the onset of Alzheimer’s in cognitively normal volunteers at high risk for the disease.

Duke launched the MURDOCK Study in 2007 with a $35 million gift from David H. Murdock, founder and developer of the MURDOCK Study, which includes a substudy of about 1,500 enrolled participants with no documented dementia or cognitive decline. These volunteers have agreed to take cognitive tests and give blood samples periodically, providing a time-lapse view of cognitive function as well as changes to the brain.

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