

Medical Progress

The Golden Age Of Alzheimer's Disease Research

(NAPS)—Scientists may be coming closer to determining the cause and treatment of Alzheimer's disease, thanks to significant research breakthroughs made over the past fifteen years.

Alzheimer's disease affects one in ten people over age 65, with symptoms that include memory loss, decline in the ability to perform routine tasks, loss of language skills and personality changes.

Making the search for a cure seem even more urgent are estimates that the number of people with Alzheimer's may reach 14 million in the U.S. by the 21st century.

For 15 years, scientists working to find that cure have been recognized with the Metropolitan Life Foundation Awards for Medical Research. Since the program began, more than \$7.5 million in personal prizes and grants have been awarded.

Nearly every significant step in the field of Alzheimer's disease research has been recognized by this award and exciting breakthroughs continue to happen.

"We are now in a golden age for Alzheimer's disease research, based on genetic breakthroughs and other research models, we have the chance to develop drugs that could stop the disease," said Rudolph Tanzi, Ph.D., of Massachusetts General Hospital and previous Award for Medical Research winner.

Researchers honored with the award this year each received an institutional grant of \$100,000 to further their work in Alzheimer's disease research and a \$25,000 personal award.

Alzheimer's Disease Statistics

Approximately four million Americans have Alzheimer's Disease (AD).

Fourteen million Americans will have AD by 2050 unless a cure or prevention is found.

One in 10 persons over 65 and nearly half of those over 85 have AD. A small percentage of people in their 30s and 40s have AD.

A person with AD will live an average of eight years and as many as 20 years from the onset of symptoms.



This year's winners are Dr. Dennis Dickson and Dr. Michael Hutton, who both performed their work at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville. Dickson and Hutton are the third and fourth winners from the Mayo Clinic.

Dr. Dickson studied the neuropathology of human brain aging and has made significant contributions to the understanding of differences between aging and Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Hutton provided scientists with a key research tool they have lacked—lab models that closely approximate the pathology of Alzheimer's disease in humans.

"It seems that each year the talented scientists throughout the world come closer to determining the cause of Alzheimer's," said Robert Benmosche, Chairman and CEO of MetLife. "The work of Drs. Dickson and Hutton are examples of progress being made in looking for the cause and a cure for this disease." For more information, visit the Foundation's Web site at www.metlife.org.