

# 2006 Alzheimer's Association Research Grants

## — Portfolio Profile

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In fiscal 2006, the Alzheimer's Association funded a total of about \$21 million in research initiatives, including 96 awards to individual investigators through our annual grant competition. Funded projects represent the proposals ranked highest by their peer reviewers in an extremely competitive field of 644 applications. Since 1982, the Association has committed over \$200 million to more than 1,500 best-of-field grant proposals.

### Awards by grant categories

- **7 Zenith Fellows Awards** support senior scientists who have made significant contributions to the field and continue to pursue promising approaches to early detection, treatment or prevention of Alzheimer's.
- **4 Everyday Technologies for Alzheimer Care** grants were awarded—in partnership with Intel Corporation and Agilent Technologies, Inc.—to investigators exploring how televisions, computers, monitoring devices and other household electronics can be used to better meet the day-to-day needs of individuals with Alzheimer's and those who care for them.
- **60 Investigator-Initiated Research Grants** fund established scientists exploring important questions across the entire dementia research spectrum, from basic neurobiology to treatment, prevention and care.
- **1 Senator Mark Hatfield Award in Clinical Research** focuses on a clinical question.
- **24 New Investigator Research Grants** support the next generation of promising scientists who earned their doctoral degrees within the last 10 years.

### Research themes

- 23 percent of 2006 projects explore the first steps in identifying potential therapeutic targets, focusing on the normal and disease-related structure, function, or basic biochemical properties of molecules that may be implicated in Alzheimer's disease.
- 21 percent study potential mechanisms by which disease-related molecules may contribute to the onset of dementia symptoms.
- 16 percent pursue further investigation of compounds that have shown promise as potential drug candidates or therapeutic targets.
- 2 percent relate to clinical studies of experimental treatments in human volunteers.
- 6 percent explore risk factors for Alzheimer's disease, including genes, metabolic factors, and environmental influences.

- 8 percent study molecules and processes that may serve a natural protective function in the brain.
- 13 percent investigate strategies to improve the reliability of current assessment tools, or to introduce new tools, such as imaging or biological markers, for diagnosing and monitoring disease progression.
- 11 percent explore best practices and novel approaches in care, or strategies to support diagnosed individuals, their caregivers and family members.

### Other awards

In addition to our grants to individual scientists, Alzheimer's Association 2006 awards support several pivotal large-scale initiatives:

- **Pittsburgh compound B supplement to the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI).** In our largest single award ever, the Association committed \$2.1 million to expand ADNI to include PET scans using Pittsburgh Compound B (PIB), an amyloid imaging agent developed in part with Association funding. PIB imaging has the potential to aid in detecting Alzheimer's disease before symptoms appear, and in enhanced monitoring of response to experimental treatments.
- **European Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (E-ADNI).** Funded through the generosity of an anonymous donor, E-ADNI aims to bring key European imaging and biomarker studies in line with ADNI protocols. If successful, E-ADNI will greatly expand the pool of ADNI data and samples.

### Alzheimer's Association peer review

For each research proposal, our Medical and Scientific Relations Division engages a custom panel of three or four volunteer scientists with expertise in the proposed area of investigation to evaluate the merits of the project anonymously. Following this process, our Medical and Scientific Advisory Council (MSAC) meets to assure the fairness of individual evaluations and fine-tune each year's awards, so that our overall portfolio covers significant established research areas and moves the field forward in important new directions. Based on scores awarded by peer reviewers and MSAC review, the Alzheimer's Association science staff estimates that approximately 30 percent of 2006 proposals deserved funding. Only about 15 percent could be supported with available resources.