
AGING TODAY

Vol. XXVIII, No. 1

PAGE 5

January–February 2007

ISSN: 1043-1284

www.agingtoday.org

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Following are some highlights from recent research about brain health in older adults:

- **Promoting active lifestyles that include walking** can protect cognitive function, according to a study by R. Abbott and research by J. Weuve published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, Sept. 22/29, 2004.
- **Obesity** may be associated with risk of Alzheimer's or other dementias (M. Kivipelto, *Archives of Neurology*, October 2005).
- **Social engagement** is tied to a reduction in cognitive decline, according to the Chicago Health and Aging Project, which is funded by the National Institute on Aging.
- **Higher household and community socioeconomic levels in early life** are associated with higher level of cognition in late life but not with risk of Alzheimer's or rate of cognitive decline, according to articles by R. S. Wilson published in *Experimental Aging Research*, October 2005, and *Neuroepidemiology*, June 2005.
- **A memory training program** called Advanced Cognitive Training for Independent and Vital Elderly (ACTIVE) was found in a clinical trial to have sustained benefits for at least five years (F. W. Unverzagt and coauthors, *JAMA*, Dec. 20, 2006).
- **Smoking significantly increases the risk** of mental decline and dementia, according to several recent studies, says a report from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Smoking increases the risk for atherosclerosis (the buildup of plaque in arteries) and other forms of vascular disease, which may be related to increased risk for dementia. ❖

—Nancy Aldrich