

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION, NATIONAL ACADEMY OF NEUROPSYCHOLOGY FUND RESEARCH EXPLORING COVID-19'S IMPACT ON THE BRAIN IN DIVERSE POPULATIONS

CHICAGO, March 8, 2022 - The Alzheimer's Association and the National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN) have awarded \$800,000 in grants to researchers focusing on the impact of COVID-19 — **including cognition, behavior and overall functioning — in older adults from health disparity populations.** The funding program, known as **NeuroCOVID**, supports research to advance our understanding of how the pandemic has affected the brains of older adults disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, yet underrepresented in research.

Older adults are more susceptible to COVID-19 infection than younger people, as well as at higher risk for severe symptoms and worse outcomes, including death. Similarly, COVID-19 has had a profound impact on individuals from diverse populations, leading to poorer outcomes than for White individuals including disproportionate infection, hospitalization, intensive care unit admission and death rates.

Research is starting to illuminate connections between COVID-19 and our brains, including changes in cognition, function and behavior. Some people who have/had COVID-19 experience neurological symptoms, including loss of smell and taste, cognitive deficits and “brain fog.” For some, these neurological symptoms persist, and researchers are working to understand why this brain dysfunction occurs, who is most at risk, and what that may mean for long-term cognitive health. To date, little is known about the neurological impacts of COVID-19 in diverse populations.

The NeuroCOVID program has funded eight projects dedicated to addressing this gap in knowledge. The awarded researchers include:

- Tiffany Walker, MD, Emory University (“Neurocognitive Sequelae of COVID-19 in African American Adults”)
- Vanessa Zizak, Ph.D., ABPP-CN, Southern California Institute for Research and Education (“NeuroCOVID: Determinants of Brain Health in Diverse Older Adults”)
- **Clara Li, Ph.D., Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (“Biomarkers of COVID-19 Induced Cognitive Loss in Diverse Older Populations”)**
- Pariya Wheeler, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham (Neurocognitive Trajectories in Older Adults with COVID-19 in the Deep South”)
- Joanna Hellmuth, MD, University of California, San Francisco (“COVID-associated cognitive changes, mood, and CSF profiles in older adults”)
- Eduardo Zimmer, Ph.D., Federal University Of Rio Grande do Sul (“Long COVID effects on brain cognition and biomarkers”)
- Carolina Marinho, Ph.D., Fundação de Desenvolvimento da Pesquisa, Belo Horizonte (“Cognitive and neuroimaging assessments in post-Covid-19 syndrome in Brazil”)
- Paola Garcia, Ph.D., Mexican Institute of Social Security (“COVID-19 infection effects in older adults associated to health disparities”)