BDR NEWS

Brains for Dementia Research

Brains for Dementia Research Newsletter summer 2025

Promoting BDR to a wider audience

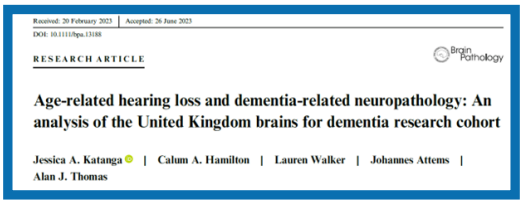
Reflecting the importance of the BDR programme, last year we brought you the news that BDR would be an exhibitor at global dementia conferences.

In 2024, we went to the world's largest meeting of dementia researchers, the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) in Philadelphia, USA. In the spring of this year, we reached out to European researchers by attending the Alzheimer's and Parkinson Disease Conference (AD/PD) in Austria and in the summer, once again we attended the AAIC, held this time in Toronto, Canada.

The dementia charities who fund the BDR programme, Alzheimer's Society and Alzheimer's Research UK, have encouraged this additional marketing drive to raise awareness of the amazing resources BDR has to offer. To maximise the use of the BDR data and tissue, we need to interact with as many researchers as possible, and being present at these large conferences, affords us the opportunity to speak face-to-face with some of the best dementia researchers in the world.

Although there were over one hundred exhibitors at the AAIC, some of them, well-known, multinational, pharmaceutical conglomerates, BDR was the **only** stand offering a broad range of available resources purely for the purpose of aiding research into neurodegeneration. This was met with surprise and delight by many, particularly those researchers from the USA and Canada who expressed their gratitude that so many BDR participants had given their time to complete multiple clinical assessments and to donate brain tissue.

There was also a notable interest in the availability of BDR data, particularly as access to data is free of charge. We received questions about the data collected and a number of researchers were keen to know whether we assessed for changes in hearing. This has now been identified as a modifiable risk factor for the prevention of dementia, a topic previously covered in a 2023 publication entitled: **"Age-related hearing loss and dementia-related neuropathology: An analysis of the United Kingdom brains for dementia research cohort"**. The results from this research using data from the BDR cohort, provided evidence for an association between dementia-related changes seen in the brain and hearing loss, suggesting that hearing loss may be more common in people with dementia of a Lewy body type.


Received: 20 February 2023 | Accepted: 26 June 2023
DOI: 10.1111/bpa.13188
RESEARCH ARTICLE
Brain Pathology
Age-related hearing loss and dementia-related neuropathology: An analysis of the United Kingdom brains for dementia research cohort
Jessica A. Katanga | Calum A. Hamilton | Lauren Walker | Johannes Attems | Alan J. Thomas

It is difficult to immediately assess the impact of these promotional measures as there is always a time lag between a researcher developing a scientific proposal, securing financial support, and then analysing data or tissue. Having BDR resources available successfully shortcuts this process. Researchers are no longer required to recruit and assess their own participants, but instead, have quick access to all the materials they need, thereby massively speeding up our potential to make true progress, progress which could not come about without the enormous contribution made by participants and their families.

If you would like to learn more about the AAIC and about the exciting developments under discussion, you can find details at [AAIC 2025: The future of Alzheimer's research is here - Alzheimer's Research UK]

Alzheimer's Society
www.https://dr.alzheimersresearchuk.org/
BDR.coordinatingcentre@ncl.ac.uk
ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH UK FOR A CURE

What's happening in your local BDR?

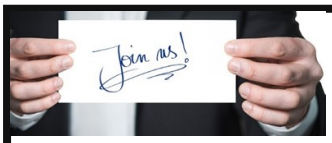
Brains for Dementia Research

Could depression be linked to the neuropathological protein TDP43?

University of BRISTOL

A Year in Industry student, Meredith Lott, has been undertaking her placement at the South West Dementia Brain Bank in Bristol. Meredith has been using both clinical (the information obtained in life from standardised assessments) and neuropathological (the information obtained after a donor has passed away) data to conduct an interesting research study to untangle the possible relationship between depression and the presence of a protein called TDP-43.

TDP-43 is crucial to normal cellular functions. However, in 2006, abnormal clumping of TDP-43 was discovered to be a hallmark of the motor neuron disease Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's disease, and Frontotemporal dementia. In subsequent years, its role in different dementia types has become increasingly apparent. For example, this clumping of TDP-43 has since been found in up to 70% of people with Alzheimer's Disease at post-mortem examination and worsens disease progression. Even though the protein can intensify the disease course in some people, we can only detect TDP-43 pathology after death. Establishing a link between the protein and the symptoms seen in life may enhance clinicians' ability to interpret and manage their patients' conditions more comprehensively. Previous research has demonstrated that hospitalisation with depression is associated with subsequent diagnosis of ALS or Frontotemporal dementia. However, understanding of the potential links in other dementia types is under-researched. Therefore, this project investigates the association between depression during life and TDP-43 clumping being present at death in a group of people with varying dementia types. The relationship between clinical and post-mortem data has been previously under-utilised, and the results of this exploration will provide valuable insight into how the two are linked or indeed if they are at all.



Our next, **online BDR Engagement Event** is due to take place on **Tuesday 11th November, at 11:00**

Newcastle University
UK | Malaysia | Singapore

The event will be hosted by the BDR team based in Newcastle. Details of the event and how to join will be emailed to BDR participants and study partners nearer the event date. If you have not attended any of the previous events but would like to do so, please contact your local BDR Centre.

MANCHESTER 1824 The University of Manchester

Brains for Dementia Research – NIHR ENRICH presentation

Phil Tinkler, Coordinator at the Manchester Brain Bank attended and gave a presentation at the National Institute for Health Research, Enabling Research in Care Homes (ENRICH) event on Wednesday 4th June.

The ENRICH care home network looks to involve more care homes with research, by increasing awareness of research opportunities to residents, staff and families. The event, hosted by Belong Care Home, Atheron was attended by residents and staff from care homes across the ENRICH Manchester care home network.

Phil gave a talk about the Manchester Brain Bank with a focus on the Brains for Dementia Research project, highlighting the aims and work conducted by the project. The talk was well received with lots of follow-up questions from the audience!

Further information about the ENRICH project can be found via the link below.
https://www.nihr.ac.uk/support-and-services/support-for-delivering-research/enabling-research-in-care-homes