Approved February 12, 2025

ARIC

The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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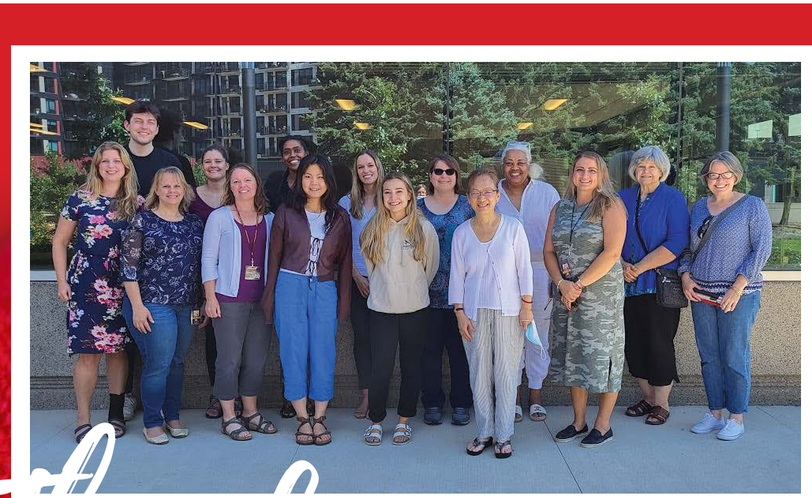

Thank you

FOR PARTICIPATING

ARIC NEWSLETTER

For ARIC Participants and Proxies

ARIC 38 YEARS

There's still time to try an activity tracker at a visit!

We are offering a number of wearable devices this visit that monitor activity and sleep. Call us to schedule your visit and learn how to receive a Fitbit watch!

"I'm really amazed at all the information that the device can provide, my family wants me to keep it on all the time so they can know as well."

"It's very interesting, I love being able to see my steps and setting a goal for myself."

- Two ARIC participants with a Fitbit

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We have new cholesterol drugs thanks to ARIC participants!

The ARIC study has enabled ground-breaking discoveries that have not only led to new knowledge about heart disease, stroke, and dementia, but also new treatments.

One example surrounds an emerging risk factor, called Lp(a). Lipoproteins are made up of lipids (fat) and protein that carry cholesterol through the blood. Having high levels of Lipoprotein(a), or Lp(a), is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

The long-standing commitment of the ARIC participants has contributed to scientific discoveries about the genetic nature of Lp(a) and its role in conditions such as heart disease and stroke. We are often asked by participants why they are asked to donate a new blood sample at each visit. Work in ARIC has shown how Lp(a) changes over time, and what factors influence those changes.

Knowledge gained from ARIC contributed to the development of a new class of medications that target the PCSK9 protein to lower LDL cholesterol and Lp(a) levels. These medications, called PCSK9 inhibitors, are now FDA-approved for certain patients with high cholesterol.

"Early insight from the ARIC study hinted that PCSK9 inhibitors might lower the risk of heart attack, and now clinical trials have proven that to be true. And now these new medicines are helping people live healthier, longer."

Eric Boerwinkle, PhD

ARIC Investigator and Dean,
UTHealth Houston School of Public Health

ARIC participants' PET scans helping to make new, easier Alzheimer's tests

By Rebecca Gottesman, MD, PhD ARIC Investigator, National Institutes of Health

When we do a PET scan of the brain, we can use a special tracer dye to look for changes related to Alzheimer's, such as amyloid buildup (plaques) that can be associated with the disease. It's helpful that we can detect these changes in living people, especially earlier on, when treatments for Alzheimer's will be most effective.

Thanks to ARIC participants and other research volunteers, scientists are identifying biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease that can be detected in the blood. This is a big deal, because before long we might be able to use a simple blood test rather than a PET scan to detect Alzheimer's. This could help a lot of people!

PET scans still give us a wealth of information, and here's what we're learning:

- People with more risk factors for heart disease and stroke in middle age are at a higher risk of having more amyloid plaques in their brains when they're older. Therefore, we may prevent some cases of dementia and Alzheimer's disease by improving heart health.
- As the new biomarker blood tests are developed, the PET results are helpful for comparison and learning what the different biomarker results mean. It's also important we look at results across a wide variety of people.

The ARIC Study is actively recruiting participants for brain imaging. Participants must be able to do both an MRI and PET scan. If you have not had brain scans with ARIC within the last 4 years and would like to take part in this innovative science, please call us at 612-500-1434.

ARIC Participant Spotlight

ARIC staff recently interviewed John S., who is 86 and was born and raised in Minnesota. He's a retired Human Resources manager and spends his time at his cabin, swimming laps at the pool, and with his family - three sons, and five grandchildren!

What has been your experience in ARIC?

"I originally joined for my own betterment, to find out what I could do to sustain my health, and be physically better. As time went on though, I found I was doing this more for research, and hope I'm helping somebody else down the road. I think it's worthwhile and makes me feel good. I feel very fortunate to be a participant. I think each of us has a responsibility to improve the lives of others, and I think the ARIC Study is doing that."

When asked what part of ARIC has been most helpful, John said he appreciated the Cardiac SPECT scan, but he always looks forward to his regular clinic visits.

Thank you so much, John, for your interview and your contributions. We appreciate what all of our participants do for ARIC!