Significant Step Towards Blood Test for Alzheimer’s

Scientists have identified a set of 10 proteins in the blood which can predict the onset of Alzheimer’s, marking a significant step towards developing a blood test for the disease. The study, published in Alzheimer’s & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer’s Association and led by King’s College London and UK proteomics company, Proteome Sciences, analyzed over 1,000 individuals and is the largest of its kind to date.

There are currently no effective long-lasting drug treatments for Alzheimer’s, and it is believed that many new clinical trials fail because drugs are given too late in the disease process. A blood test could be used to identify patients in the early stages of memory loss for clinical trials to find drugs to halt the progression of the disease.

The researchers used data from three international studies. Blood samples from a total of 1,148 individuals (476 with Alzheimer’s disease; 220 with ‘Mild Cognitive Impairment’ (MCI) and 452 elderly controls without dementia) were analyzed for 26 proteins previously shown to be associated with Alzheimer’s disease. A sub-group of 476 individuals across all three groups also had an MRI brain scan.

Researchers identified 16 of these 26 proteins to be strongly associated with brain shrinkage in either MCI or Alzheimer’s. They then ran a second series of tests to establish which of these proteins could predict the progression from MCI to Alzheimer’s. They identified a combination of 10 proteins capable of predicting whether individuals with MCI would develop Alzheimer’s disease within a year, with an accuracy of 87 percent.

“Memory problems are very common, but the challenge is identifying who is likely to develop dementia,” said Dr. Abdul Hye, lead author of the study from the Institute of Psychiatry at King’s College London, in a university-released press statement. “There are thousands of proteins in the blood, and this study is the culmination of many years’ work identifying which ones are clinically relevant. We now have a set of 10 proteins that can predict whether someone with early symptoms of memory loss, or mild cognitive impairment, will develop Alzheimer’s disease within a year, with a high level of accuracy.”

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common form of dementia. Globally, it is estimated that 135 million people will have dementia by 2050. In 2010, the annual global cost of dementia was estimated at $604 billion. MCI includes problems with day-to-day memory, language and attention and can be an early sign of dementia, or a symptom of stress or anxiety. Approximately 10% of people diagnosed with MCI develop dementia within a year but apart from regular assessments to measure memory decline, there is currently no accurate way of predicting who will, or won’t, develop dementia.
Meet Dr. John C. Morris of Washington University School of Medicine

John C. Morris, M.D. is the Director and Principal Investigator of the Charles F. and Joanne Knight Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center at Washington University School of Medicine. Dr. Morris earned his medical degree from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in Rochester, New York. He completed residencies at Akron General Medical Center and the Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital, and a postdoctoral fellowship in neuropharmacology at Washington University School of Medicine.

He is a former member of the Alzheimer’s Association National Board of Directors and its Medical Scientific Advisory Council. Dr. Morris received the 2013 Medical & Scientific Honoree from the Alzheimer’s Association and ranked in the top 1% of investigators in the field of Neuroscience and Behavior by Essential Science Indicators database.

Dr. John C. Morris

Updates to ProviderInfoSource Beginning October 1, 2014

The new PAYMENT STATUS tab on ProviderInfoSource will be available October 1, 2014, giving you and your staff quick access to payment detail for HealthLink State of Illinois members.

Helpful tips for the new PAYMENT STATUS feature:

- **ProviderInfoSource Administrators note:** All users requiring detailed payment access will need to be given access, within their profile, under “User Management”.
- Search payment status using either the check number or check amount.
- Locate check numbers within the Claim Status tab.
- Select the check number within the Payment Status results to view payment detail.
- Select the ID number to view payment detail at the claim level.
- Search payment status on claims **processed** beginning October 1, 2014.
- Payments prior to October 1, 2014 will not be available on the new tab.

As previously announced, HealthLink has selected Emdeon as its electronic payment and remittance reporting vendor for HealthLink State of Illinois Members. HealthLink providers can enroll with Emdeon for electronic funds transfers (EFT) payments and electronic remittance advices (ERA).

**Helpful Hints for Emdeon ePayment Enrollment**

- Ensure that you are an authorized representative of the designated provider.
- Have your contact, organization and financial account information available.
- Supply your NPI in the Provider ID field.
- Supply your HealthLink Vendor ID (located on your most recent remittance advice from HealthLink).
- Review all terms and authorization forms prior to submitting them to Emdeon.

**Emdeon ePayment Enrollment Options**

- Complete the online form at emdeon.com/ef
- Call 866-506-2830
- Download the form at emdeon.com/epayment to enroll by mail or fax

If you need further assistance setting up ProviderInfoSource users within your organization or navigating the new feature, please contact HealthLink Customer Service or your HealthLink Network Consultant.

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Meet Your HealthLink Network Consultants!

HealthLink’s dedicated Network Consultants are assigned to you and your facility based on your location in our service area. The sole purpose of the Consultants is to provide simple solutions so you are able to concentrate on your business and the care of your patients. If you ever have a HealthLink question or would like to schedule a face-to-face meeting, feel free to contact your designated Network Consultant.

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Coding Corner

Claims with Unlisted Surgical CPT Codes

Some surgical procedures performed by providers might not have specific CPT codes, otherwise known as unlisted CPT codes. In order to avoid delay of a claim when submitting unlisted surgical procedure codes, please be sure to include operative or procedure notes and clearly designate the portion of the report that identifies the procedure with the unlisted codes.

If you have a coding issue you would like to see addressed in this column, please contact your HealthLink Network Consultant.

Cover story information source:
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