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## PACT Study Update

### A Message from Dr. O'Brien, PACT Study Principal Investigator

Since 2021, the PACT study has enrolled nearly 7500 participants in the study across 10 different sites. As we head into winter and wrap up 2024, we expect to hit our enrollment goals of 7600 participants! This is a significant milestone for the study and we would not be here without you.

We also hit another milestone this year as participants who enrolled in PACT in 2021 began to return for 3-year visits. This ongoing commitment and participation in the 3-year visit is particularly important, as this is how we will be able to determine the outcomes of the PACT study. We completed over 300 3-year visits across all study sites this year. It is exciting to be in this stage of the study and sites are eager to welcome back participants for this critical visit.

None of this would be possible without each of you (our study participants). You are actively contributing to scientific discovery by helping our researchers better understand cognitive aging and dementia prevention, and we are so grateful for you!

## Did You Know?



As of June 2022, the PACT study is collaborating with the National Centralized Repository for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (NCRAD) to collect blood samples from enrolled participants. Participants provide blood samples of about 20 mL (about 4 teaspoons) at two different time points in the study. This collaboration allows researchers to test for potential plasma biomarkers of brain health as well as evaluate your APOE genotype, a well-known risk factor of cognitive decline. The National Institute of Health (NIH) provided an additional funding award of \$3.2 million to the inclusion of blood collection in the PACT Study.

We are excited about this addition to the PACT study and its potential to advance efforts for early detection. If you are curious about this award, or would like to know more about the science behind biomarkers and APOE genotype, please check out these resources:

- [USF Health Press Release](#)
- [Alzheimer's Disease Genetics Fact Sheet](#)
- [Biomarker Research](#)

## Common Questions

### **Why do we ask you not to participate in any other research studies while enrolled in the PACT study?**

To get the most accurate results from your participation in our study, it's important to participate in only one study at a time. When you participate in multiple studies or use different programs designed to improve memory or thinking skills, the effects of these treatments can overlap. This makes it harder for researchers to understand how each one affects memory and cognitive function. By committing to the PACT study alone, you help ensure that our findings are reliable and that we can draw clear conclusions about the effects of this specific study.

### **Why do we ask you to not complete any other interventions or programs aimed at improving memory or thinking skills, such as brain games or computerized brain training programs, while you're enrolled in our study?**

Focusing on just one program allows the researchers to measure more accurately how the PACT study's intervention impacts your memory and thinking skills. Without the influence of other cognitive programs, the data we collect from your participation will be more consistent, reliable, and reflective of the PACT study's effects. This helps us ensure that the results are meaningful and contribute to valuable advancements in memory research.

Is there content you would like to see featured in our next newsletter? Please send to [MCOM-SAGEmarketing@usf.edu](mailto:MCOM-SAGEmarketing@usf.edu) with subject line "**Newsletter Ideas**"

# Stakeholder Spotlight

## Participant Perspective

Over the last several years, Donna and her spouse have taken to the road in their RV exploring the wonders and beauty of the United States. They have made new friends and memories along the way. The open road offers one adventure after another that Donna plans to enjoy for years to come.

When Donna is back home in Florida, she remains active in her community staying engaged and making the most of this chapter in her life. Connecting with friends and loved ones is key. In recent



years, she started hearing the stories of close friends with loved ones and spouses living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. She has become acutely aware of the challenges of living with and caring for someone with dementia. Their experiences have affirmed for Donna how important it is to take purposeful and proactive steps to promote one's brain health.

Three years ago, Donna heard about the PACT study. She eagerly volunteered so she could potentially improve her memory and brain health. She knows others who have participated in medication clinical trials and was curious about a clinical trial focused on how computer-based brain games might contribute to science and finding alternative preventive and/or treatment options that are not medication-based. Recently, Donna completed her final appointment for the PACT study. Despite the call of the road and the natural ebb and flow of life over the last three years, Donna always returned to her commitment to the PACT study.

Donna knows through watching the members of her older adult community come and go over the years that those with the best quality of life are finding ways to stay active whether it's through crafts, games, or pickle ball. She is proud to have completed a clinical trial focused on computer-based brain games, an activity that may reduce the risk of dementia. She is proud that her contribution to science will help other older adults. She is hopeful that the efforts she makes will keep her brain sharp so she can continue to honor her love for travel and enjoy many more miles of adventure in her RV.

## Meet the Team – Sharon Ibarra, USF Lakeland

With a Bachelor of Science in Biomanufacturing/Bioengineering, Sharon Ibarra, a Clinical Research Associate and PACT Spanish Coordinator, possesses a strong desire to assist others and engage in meaningful conversations with individuals. Sharon's home base for the PACT Study is the University of South Florida's site in Lakeland, FL. Her commitment to the PACT Study stems from personal experience, having witnessed the impact of the disease on individuals and their loved ones. Sharon's dedication is fueled by her hope to stop the progression of her father's condition, believing that this research may provide a solution to prevent Alzheimer's and cognitive decline. The availability of the study in Spanish greatly excites her as she was raised in a Nicaraguan household. She believes offering the study in Spanish creates opportunities for minority groups to be represented in research. Many are unaware that Latinos face higher risks to experiencing Alzheimer's and dementia than others. She anticipates that this development helps overcome certain language barriers and can foster a more comprehensive understanding of dementia among Spanish-speaking communities. She believes that this may serve as a starting point for developing tailored intervention programs specifically designed for Latino populations.



***Thank you for your contribution and commitment to the fight against dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease.***

For updates on the PACT study, visit [www.PACTstudy.org](http://www.PACTstudy.org) or follow us on Facebook