

Fitness for the Ageing Brain Study II (FABS II)

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Summary: The primary aim of this 3-site multicentre randomised controlled trial (RCT) is to establish whether physical activity (PA) can decrease the rate of cognitive decline amongst patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's Disease (AD). The main hypothesis is that participants with mild to moderate AD who are randomised to a program of PA will experience significantly less cognitive decline by the end of the intervention than participants with mild to moderate AD randomised to usual care. Previously, some of the researchers involved in this study successfully developed a PA program for participants with mild cognitive impairment (FABS) and tested this program in a pilot study with patients with mild to moderate AD.

After a baseline visit participants will be randomised to either the intervention (PA) or usual care. Participants are patients with mild to moderate AD living in Perth, Melbourne or Brisbane and their carer. The intervention will be based on the Stages of Change model and will comprise three components: the PA program, the behavioural intervention package, and telephone monitoring. Pedometers will be used to monitor PA level. We will use a series of well-established tests and instruments to collect cognitive, physical and clinical parameters.

The primary outcome is cognitive decline measured with the ADAS-cog. In the pilot study, participants in the usual care group (n=10) deteriorated in 6 months 4.47 ± 6.36 points whereas the patients in the intervention group (n=12) deteriorated 2.21 ± 4.88 points. Secondary outcomes are quality of life, functional level, physical fitness and health measures. Should our main hypothesis be confirmed, a systematic program of PA would have the potential benefit of providing an affordable and relatively simple intervention. By delaying deterioration in patients with mild to moderate AD, we may be able to postpone disability, prolong independent living and potentially reduce the costs associated with care.

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