

## **BRIDGET**

### **BRain Imaging, cognition, Dementia and next generation GENomics: a Transdisciplinary approach to search for risk and protective factors of neurodegenerative disease**

Establishing efficient prevention strategies for dementia and Alzheimer disease (AD) is a major health priority for the coming years. An important hurdle is that pathological processes begin many years before clinical diagnosis, hence efficient prevention should be initiated very early. The BRIDGET Consortium explores the genetic and epigenetic determinants of quantitative MRI-markers of brain aging that are powerful predictors of dementia/AD risk, and examines the clinical significance of the markers in a population-based setting. The outcomes of this project are expected to enrich our understanding of the biological mechanisms underlying early structural brain alterations that portend an increased dementia risk, and thus contribute to the discovery of novel therapeutic targets. The progress of the project since its inception is briefly summarized below (of note, a no-cost extension has been requested and obtained until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020).

First, several association analyses of common, low frequency, and rare variants in relation with MRI-markers of brain aging, including previously unexplored ones, have been published or submitted, using elaborate statistical models, in collaboration with additional cohorts from the CHARGE consortium. Phenotypes studied encompass extreme distributions of composite MRI-markers of cerebral small vessel disease; white matter hyperintensity volume; cortical thickness/surface/volume; principal components grouping together cortical regions with shared variance in their surface area; intracranial volume. Additional genetic association analyses at the consortium level are underway, including for novel MRI-markers of brain aging such as dilated perivascular space burden, and composite measures such as the brainage score (manuscripts in preparation). These results are providing important novel insight into common and low frequency variants associated with MRI-markers of brain aging. They also shed new light on changes and genetic determinants of structural brain imaging markers throughout the lifespan.

Second, leveraging JPND and other funds, we have generated two unique resources to study the molecular determinants of MRI-markers of brain aging. One resource consists of a set of ~4,000 middle-aged to older community participants with quantitative brain MRI data and whole genome sequencing. The other resource is a unique set of >1,000 participants with brain MRI data and methyl-C sequencing, selected to represent participants with extreme distributions of cerebral small vessel disease (SVD). By the end of the project this resource will not only provide novel insight into the epigenetic determinants of SVD, but also enable to generate unique high quality reference data for analyses of co-localization for GWAS association signals with blood methylation quantitative trait loci.

**Let op; hieronder hangt nog een lange lijst met publicaties!**

## Manuscripts:

### Published

- Duperron MG, Tzourio C, Schilling S, Zhu YC, Soumaré A, Mazoyer B, Debette S. *High dilated perivascular space burden: a new MRI marker for risk of intracerebral hemorrhage.* **Neurobiol Aging.** 2019 Sep 10;84:158-165. doi:[10.1016/j.neurobiolaging.2019.08.031](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neurobiolaging.2019.08.031). [Epub ahead of print] PMID:31629114
  
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**In Preparation - currently being finalized for submission**

- M Knol et al. *Intracranial volume GWAS meta-analysis*
- MG Duperron et al. *Dilated perivascular space burden*
- Y Saba et al. *Genetics of white matter hyperintensity stratified on hypertension status*.
- G Beaudet et al. *Diffusion tensor imaging markers of brain aging across the lifespan*.
- S Frenzel et al. *Genetics of the Brain age score*