

DIPPA-FTD

Diagnostic and Prognostic Precision medicine for behavioral variant Frontotemporal Dementia

The behavioural variant of frontotemporal dementia (bvFTD) is a common cause of early-onset dementia that presents with changes in behavior and personality. It is often misdiagnosed and mistaken for a psychiatric disorder, such as depression or bipolar disorder.

Unlike with Alzheimer's disease, we still lack reliable tests that enable a diagnosis of bvFTD. Recent research attention has been on hereditary forms of FTD; however, the critical challenge is how to diagnose non-familial forms of bvFTD (which accounts for 80% of all cases) early in the disease course and therefore distinguish it from late-onset psychiatric disorders that may mimic bvFTD. In this project, we will combine existing data from cohorts from several countries including clinical, neuroimaging, and blood markers combined with novel markers that were developed by the participants of the project. We will also collect data from deceased bvFTD and psychiatric patients who had their diagnosis confirmed through pathological examination of their brains in a brain bank. We will define which of the available markers are the best predictors of the bvFTD diagnosis. We will apply the identified markers in new patient cohorts to be established and by using a statistic modeling approach, we aim to create a paradigm that enables both accurate diagnosis and prediction of the clinical course (prognosis).

Our project will contribute towards an early and accurate identification of bvFTD versus psychiatric disorders, which is crucial for appropriate management and treatment. Moreover, our results will increase the ability to predict rate of progression in non-familial bvFTD and other patients presenting with behavioral changes, that is essential for enrolment in drug trials and personalized treatments.

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Coordinator : Yolande Pijnenburg
 ✉ : yal.pijnenburg@amsterdamumc.nl



Consortium Members

	Yolande Pijnenburg	Alzheimer center and department of Neurology, Amsterdam University Medical Center, The Netherlands
	Janine Diehl-Schmid	Technical University of Munich, Germany
	Daniela Galimberti	University of Milan, Italy
	Simon Ducharme	McGill University Montreal, Canada
	Olivier Piguet	University of Sydney, Australia
	Glenda Halliday	University of Sydney, Australia