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The Aging, Demographics, and Memory Study: Study Design and Methods

Subject Area: Neurology and Neuroscience , Public Health

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Abstract

Objective: We describe the design and methods of the Aging, Demographics, and Memory Study (ADAMS), a new national study that will provide data on the antecedents, prevalence, outcomes, and costs of dementia and 'cognitive impairment, not demented' (CIND) using a unique study design based on the nationally representative Health and Retirement Study (HRS). We also illustrate potential uses of the ADAMS data and provide information to interested researchers on obtaining ADAMS and HRS data. *Methods:* The ADAMS is the first population-based study of dementia in the United States to include subjects from all regions of the country, while at the same time using a single standardized diagnostic protocol in a community-based sample. A sample of 856 individuals age 70 or older who were participants in the ongoing HRS received an extensive in-home clinical and neuropsychological assessment to determine a diagnosis of normal, CIND, or dementia. Within the CIND and dementia categories, subcategories (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia) were assigned to denote the etiology of cognitive impairment. *Conclusion:* Linking the ADAMS dementia clinical assessment data to the wealth of available longitudinal HRS data on health, health care utilization, informal care, and economic resources and behavior, will provide a unique opportunity to study the onset of CIND and dementia in a nationally representative population-based sample, as well as the risk factors, prevalence, outcomes, and costs of CIND and dementia.

Keywords: Dementia, Aging, Epidemiologic studies, Population-based studies

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