



VETSA MRI 3

You participated in, or were eligible for, “The VETSA Longitudinal MRI Twin Study of Aging” 5-6 years ago, and so you are automatically invited to take part in this follow-up Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) study. The investigators want to study how genes and environmental factors affect the brain as we age and how the information they will collect in the VETSA (such as information on thinking processes and physical health) is related to brain differences during this aging process.

1. What’s involved and how long will it take?

Most of the cognitive tests, medical history interview, questionnaires, and other tests will be the same as last time; several tests have been eliminated to shorten the day. For the MRI part of the study, the investigators would like you to have a picture taken of your brain with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). You’ll be in the MRI scanner for about 1 hour.

2. How long will the testing take?

Testing is a little shorter this time because, for most people, everything including the MRI will be completed in one testing day. The MRI will take place after testing. Each person is different, so the time may vary. But most people will complete the day by 6pm.

3. What if I’m not sure about participating again?

As before, your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate you can change your mind any time. Remember, if you sign the authorization form, you are *not* agreeing to participate; signing it only means that you are allowing us to talk with you and we may be able to answer your questions in more detail about participating.

4. What if this is not a good time for me?

Just like before, you don’t have to come in right away. If you are interested in participating, it is best to let us know now, as we can schedule a time for you to come up to a full year from now.

5. What if I can’t get off work?

We can schedule your testing on a weekend or you can schedule a time to come in that is far enough away to give you time to plan a day off from work.

6. What if I’m not healthy enough to travel?

If you feel strongly that health concerns will make it too difficult for you to travel, we can arrange for a member of our staff to travel to you in order to complete the evaluation. Of course, if we travel to you there won’t be any MRI.

7. Do I have to travel to the same city that I went to five years ago?

You will need to travel to U.C. San Diego. This time we are only funded to conduct the MRI study from this one site.

8. Can I participate if my brother doesn’t?

Yes. It is still very valuable for the study if you participate even if your brother does not.

9. Can my brother and I come together? Do we need to come together?

Either way is fine. You can travel together or separately.

10. Who pays for this?

The study is funded by the National Institute on Aging (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). This provides us with the funds to pay for your airline tickets, hotel, ground transportation plus \$64 for meals on the day of testing. If you drive, we can generally give you mileage reimbursement.

11. What will I receive if I participate?

In addition to the \$64 for meals on the day of testing, we will give you \$650 for participating. We will also give you a travel mug with the VETSA logo in appreciation of your time and effort.

12. Can I bring my spouse or family? Who pays for their travel?

Like before, you can bring along family members, but the project cannot pay for them. They can stay in the hotel room with you, but if there is more than 1 extra person, the hotel may charge an additional fee. You can talk with people at the hotel about this directly. You may make arrangements to spend some extra time for vacation before or after the study. We cannot pay for the additional time, but your flight—regardless of your dates of travel—and your 2 nights in the hotel will still be covered.

13. Will the results be confidential?

Yes. Like we did 5 years ago, we have obtained a Certificate of Confidentiality from the Department of Health and Human Services. This is a legal document that protects us from having to give out any of the study information, even if there were a subpoena for it.

14. What will the blood test be for this time?

Like before, we're going to test your blood for standard things like blood sugar, cholesterol, and inflammation that may be important for aging. We will *not* be testing for drugs or alcohol.

15. What are the risks? Are there any risks involved in the MRI procedure?

Some of the tests might make you fatigued or anxious, but that has been very rare. Taking a blood sample may include some discomfort, bruising, or rarely infection. Additionally, there may be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. If you have any metal in your body (for example, from surgery or shrapnel) you will not be able to have the MRI. If you are very anxious or afraid of closed spaces, you may not want to have the MRI. The researchers will check with you about these things to make sure it is safe for you to have the MRI.

16. If I get VA benefits, will this affect them?

No. Whether or not you participate will have no effect on any benefits that you may receive.

17. Can I find out about what you've found in the study after I've participated?

Yes. The VET Registry team will continue to send you newsletters to tell you what's happening or you can check out the project website.

18. Can I talk to someone at the VET Registry before I agree to participate?

Yes, you are welcome to call the Registry's coordinator, toll-free at 1-866-774-9647.

19. Are there any x-rays or radiation in the MRI?

No, the MRI does not involve any radiation, such as x-rays. However, if you are unsure if you have metal in your eye, you may need to have something called an orbital x-ray either from your own physician or before you have the MRI. This would be at our expense. If you are especially concerned with radiation exposure or you have had a lot of x-rays already, you should discuss this with your doctor.

20. Can I still participate even if I do not want to do the MRI?

Yes, your information is still important to us even if you do not want to or cannot do the MRI portion of the study.

21. How do I let the researchers know if I am interested or if I have some questions?

Please return the agreement form to abtSRBI. They will send it to the VET Registry, which then send it to us! Once we receive the form we will call you and can answer questions. You can also call the same people whose numbers are listed in the accompanying letter to ask any questions about the study.