



PALS NEWSLETTER

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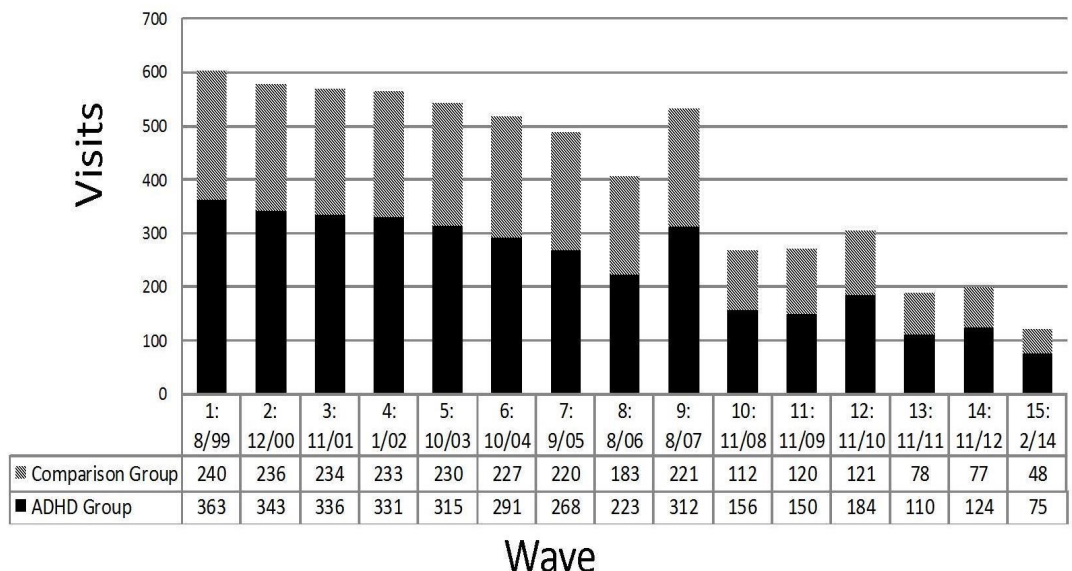
Study Update ~ The PALS study began its 17th year of funding in September. A total of 644 young adults and 828 parents have been enrolled in the study. To date, 92% of the enrolled young adults (595) remain active in the study. A total of 13,841 interviews have been completed—6,145 with young adults and 7,696 with parents.

We hope you all know how much we appreciate your faithful participation in the project!

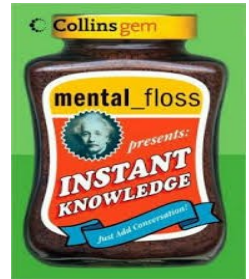
The chart below shows our young adult visits completed by data collection wave. In the past week, we completed our 15th wave of assessments. The number of visits/wave is highest in the first nine waves, when everyone was interviewed annually. Beginning in Wave 10, the number decreases, reflecting the start of the age-based interviewing schedule. To keep in contact with participants during the time that they were not due for interviews, we began conducting Interim Phone Contacts, or IPCs. This has been a valuable way of keeping up to date contact information for the entire sample. Since we began conducting these in 2009, we have conducted a total of 1,936 IPCs, allowing us to have annual contact with more than 90% of entire sample.

A year ago, we began asking our young adult participants to provide permission for us to contact their spouse or significant other and a close friend. We then contacted these individuals to complete a few brief questionnaires remotely via computer. To date, 74 spouses/significant others/friends have participated, representing 60 young adult PALS participants. As many participants spend less time with their parents, we are finding it helpful to invite other important people in their life to participate in the study.

Young Adult Visits Completed by Wave



MENTAL FLOSS (www.mentalfloss.com) is a magazine and website that aims to make you smile, feed your right brain, nurture your left brain, indulge your scattered brain, and help you learn to spin the globe. It was there that we found this list that seemed particularly appropriate for wintertime!



11 Ingenious Ways to Exercise Your Brain When You're Stuck Inside

1. *Try Brain Fitness Programs*, like the website and app Luminosity. Users can build a personalized training program. A limited version of the app is available for free, an expanded version for purchase.
2. *Tests and Quizzes*: apps and quizzes on the internet test your general knowledge of geography, science, math, literature, or more and prepare you to be a stellar Jeopardy contestant. Search the subject you are interested in + quiz at the iTunes or Google play stores.
3. *Guessing games*, like the popular app Heads Up that can be played with friends and is available for \$0.99.
4. *Puzzles, like crosswords or Sudoku*, available in paper or app form. See page 5 for our Sudoku puzzle. The Alzheimer's Association has endorsed Sudoku as a potential tool for staving off the disease, based on a 2012 study published in the Archives of Neurology.
5. *Word Games*, like Words with Friends, may also be a helpful way to exercise your brain, as featured in the current movie "Still Alice".
6. *A longer term project* is learning a language with programs like Rosetta Stone
7. *Video games* like time-honored favorites Super Mario, Starcraft and Call of Duty
8. *Drawing*, on your own or with an app like How to Draw
9. *Building and Design*, either with wood, model airplane parts or clay or an app devoted to model construction like Sketchup, K-3D and Anim8or
10. *Tai Chi*- to exercise your body and your brain, for guidance check out apps Tai Chi Step by Step or Tai Chi Workout
11. *Get Happy*- the celebrated app Happify helps to elevate your mind's positivity through games and quizzes

<http://mentalfloss.com/artcile/61562/11-ingenious-ways-exercise-your-brain-when-youre-stuck-inside>



December, 2014 PALS Study Holiday Elves

Tara Draper, Kellie Spontak, Jason Duin and Carol Walker cheerfully stuff more than 1,100 holiday calendars to PALS participants, fueled with Starbucks provided by Dr. Molina.

Note to Young Adult Participants: a WePay holiday gift card was mailed with your calendar.

Don't forget to cash it!



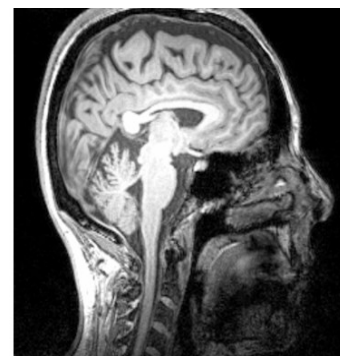
Neuroimaging Project Begins



As we told you in November, PALS Principal Investigator Brooke Molina and colleague Cecile Ladouceur, Ph.D. were recently awarded a five-year grant from the National Institute on Mental Health to study brain functioning in 200 PALS participants using fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) technology. This project grew out of a pilot study that we conducted in 2010 and 2011 with 40 PALS participants. We began screening PALS participants for eligibility at the first of year, and successfully scanned our first participant on January 22! To date, we have scanned five PALS participants and have another 8 scheduled to be scanned over the next 6 weeks. The feedback from our first participants has been positive and is helping us to tweak our procedures to make the experience as enjoyable as possible. We are attempting to scan participants close to their regularly scheduled PALS visit.

An introductory letter was sent out to approximately 60 PALS participants who have either recently completed their PALS visit or who are due for their PALS visit in the next few months. A follow up telephone screen is conducted to determine eligibility for the study. Approximately two-thirds of the PALS participants we have screened so far have been eligible to participate in the study. Participation in the project involves one six-hour visit to Oakland. The first half of the project involves an MRI scan at the MR Research Center at Presbyterian University Hospital. We are looking at the structure and functioning of the brain during completion of tasks like simple computer games. Participants are given the opportunity to practice the tasks and acclimate to the scanner in a simulator at the MRRC. The second half of the project is completed in our offices and involves the complete of computer tasks and a brief set of questionnaires. Participants are paid up to \$300. For many participants, the highlight of the day is being provided with lunch from Jimmy John's!

PALS Coordinator Tracey Wilson volunteered to be a pilot subject and we were all shocked to learn that she DOES have a brain (at right)! Study participants are provided with a picture of their brain like this taken during the scan.



Interviewer Lacy Blazetic Marries

Lacy Blazetic, who has been with the PALS study since February, 2011 and her college sweetheart Matt are being married on February 20th at the Strong House Inn in Vergennes, VT. Lacy and Matt are snow-lovers and are sure to get their wish for a "white wedding"! They met six years ago on a blind date while undergraduates at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Matt is pursuing a PhD in Computer Science at Case, which might explain why he understood her being an hour late for their first date because a research meeting she was attending ran late! Lacy will complete her Master's degree in Applied Developmental Psychology from Pitt this spring. In addition to working for PALS, Lacy coordinates PALS Co-Investigator Sarah Pedersen's alcohol studies, ACE and ACE 2. Congratulations and very best wishes, Lacy and Matt!



Facts about the month of February

February is the shortest month of the year, but sometimes, it can feel like the longest. The holiday celebrations are mostly done and visiting becomes a thing of the past as people hibernate in their own pads. Let's fight those February blahs by learning some facts about the month and some useful ways to pass the time.



Here are some things you may have known about the month of February:

- February is the third month of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere, February is the seasonal equivalent of August in the Northern Hemisphere, thereby making it the third month of summer.
- February starts on the same day of the week as both March and November, and August in leap years.
- Groundhog Day is February 2nd. If the groundhog doesn't see his shadow, there will be an early spring; see it, and there will be 6 more weeks of winter.
- Its birthstone is the amethyst. It symbolizes piety, humility, spiritual wisdom and sincerity

Here are some things you may *not* have known about the month of February:

- February is Pull Your Sofa Off the Wall Month - This encourages people to experiment with and freshen up their home decor through new furniture arrangement.
- Historical names for February include the Old English term "Solmonath", meaning "mud month"
- Return Carts to the Supermarket Month occurs in February
- Love your Pet Day is February 20th

February can also be a month of getting things done around the house that you have been meaning to get to. According to Stlyeathome.com, here are few things you can do to help pass the time until spring finally arrives!

1. Scrub the windows

Yes, it's too cold to do the outsides, but give the insides a good hard scrub and you'll let in all the light that's there. And let's face it; at this time of year, every little bit helps.

2) Clean your desktop

Even though it's not very thrilling, plan to sit down at your desk for an hour, sift through your files, purge what's irrelevant and organize the rest. Do the same with your e-mail account. Your system may run faster and even if it doesn't, you'll have a better handle on the files, pictures and music you've been holding on to.

3) Send a Valentine

This month, send a Valentine to someone other than the man or woman in your life.

4) Turn off the TV

It's so simple to plunk yourself in front of the tube and stay there all night. Don't get sucked into the abyss, it's too easy on your brain and too hard on your waistline (snacking and surfing go hand and hand). You don't have to give it up altogether, but if you flick on the TV every night, plan to do something different for two of those evenings. Read, listen to music or call an old friend . . .the possibilities are limitless.



Kellie Spontak, PALS Interviewer

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Address Correction Requested