

# **UW School of Medicine and Public Health: Research funding awarded to identify ways to improve emergency department visits for people with dementia**

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MADISON, Wis. – The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) is one of four sites awarded a total of \$7.5 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct research that could lead to improved care in emergency departments for people with dementia.

The effort aims to leverage expertise in emergency medicine, geriatrics and Alzheimer's disease and related dementias to identify gaps in emergency care for people with dementia and address those gaps, according to Manish Shah, MD, MPH, professor of emergency medicine and co-principal investigator.

For example, many commonly used medications are problematic for people with dementia. Better understanding which medications are safest for this vulnerable population would help clinicians better care for them, he said.

“The emergency department is not an ideal care setting for people with dementia,” Shah said. “What we want to do is find better ways to care for one of our most vulnerable populations, namely older adults with cognitive impairment.”

The funds will support Geriatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network 2.0 – Advancing Dementia Care (GEAR 2.0 ADC), which is a collaboration between SMPH, Yale School of Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University

and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. All four institutions are home to an NIH-National Institute on Aging-designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. Ula Hwang, MD, MPH, at Yale, is serving as co-principal investigator.

The study has two phases. In phase one, the co-principal investigators will convene a panel of experts to review current research related to dementia patient care in emergency departments, identify areas where more research is needed, and create an infrastructure in which care researchers across the country can conduct this research.

In phase two, the research will commence. With joint support from numerous partners, GEAR 2.0-ADC will award more than \$1.1 million to fund nine pilot study awards. Phase two will also see the deployment of resources and mentoring support to help researchers successfully execute their research projects.

The network's executive committee, task force and advisory committee members hail from more than 35 academic medical centers across the United States. GEAR 2.0 community partners include American Geriatrics Society, American Federation on Aging Research/Clin-STAR, Alzheimer's Association, Emergency Medicine Foundation, Family Caregiver Alliance, Geriatric Emergency Department Collaborative, IMPACT Collaboratory, NIA Research Coordination Center Network, Patient Family Center Care and West Health Institute.