

ACT's Clinical Consensus Team

In this edition of the newsletter, we would like to tell you about ACT's referral visits and introduce you to our clinical consensus team. If we see that there has been a significant change in your performance on the cognitive tests we conduct at visits every 2 years, we may ask our team of clinicians to investigate. We will schedule two visits - an evaluation visit with one of our physicians for a medical examination and a separate visit with an ACT psychometrist to obtain more detailed information on your current health and cognitive abilities.

What to Expect at an ACT evaluation visit:

A typical visit from an ACT clinician occurs in your home or place of your choosing and is somewhat like a visit to your primary care doctor. We will spend a few minutes asking some questions about your general health and memory, and then do a brief physical exam, concentrating on your physical and neurological function. You can stay fully dressed and the whole thing takes about 20-40 minutes. On a separate occasion, one of our ACT psychometrists will visit you and help you with several tests of memory and thinking, which is a longer visit (60-90 minutes). We introduced our team of psychometrists, Patti, Jared, Isabel, and Leslie in our Spring 2025 newsletter.

After these visits, the full team of clinicians, psychometrists and neuropsychologists gets together in a monthly "consensus meeting" to discuss the results. As a group, we review all the information to determine whether your cognitive performance is consistent with performance expected for someone of your age and prior abilities. If so, we will let you know, and we will continue to schedule your regular ACT study visits every two years. If not, we will send you a letter to recommend that you follow up with your own physician to determine if there may be a physical cause for your memory loss that could be treated. After that, we will follow up with you for a brief check-in every year.

So, who are we?

Wayne McCormick, MD, MPH is a Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington (UW). Dr. McCormick has been involved with ACT from the beginning of the study in 1994. He has conducted hundreds of house calls to ACT participants, which he finds thoroughly enjoyable. He has also enjoyed the camaraderie of his colleagues and staff involved in the ACT study. Dr. McCormick plans to retire in 2026. He has been working with a team of clinicians who have recently joined the ACT study to ensure that we keep doing things the same way we have done them since 1994. He is confident he is leaving the study in very good hands.

Dr. Michael Persenaire, MD is a neurologist at the UW who specializes in cognitive/behavioral neurology and neuroimmunology. He joined ACT's clinical team in 2024. He has really enjoyed meeting with ACT participants and is grateful for the opportunity to meet people in their homes. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family, playing basketball and golf, listening to music, and growing small trees for miniature landscapes.



Front row: Gina, Sue, Kim. Back row: Wayne, Mike.

Gina Kang, MD, MPH, MHS is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine at the UW. Her clinical work includes time in inpatient and

outpatient geriatric care and outpatient palliative care in a memory clinic, providing support for individuals and families living with dementia. She joined the ACT team in 2025. In her personal time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and kids, travelling (now exploring the world with two small children!), the great outdoors, and a great cup of coffee!

Kim O'Connor, MD, MACP is an Internal Medicine physician at the General Internal Medicine Clinic at UWMC-Roosevelt and a Clinical Professor of General Internal Medicine at the UW. Dr. O'Connor provides comprehensive primary care to a diverse adult patient population. She works to educate primary care providers on efficient tools for increasing detection of cognitive impairment and improving care for people living with dementia. In 2025, she joined the ACT clinical team and is enjoying the direct connection with ACT participants. She also said she enjoys “the collaborative work with such an incredible group of clinicians, staff, and researchers.” In her spare time, she is an avid traveler. She takes weekly art classes and helps to bring art into medicine. She plays soccer weekly and is a Sounders season ticket holder. Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, she will often be found kayaking, hiking and cross-country skiing and definitely takes advantage of every sunny Seattle day!

Team members behind the scenes:

In addition to the clinicians who perform the home visits, ACT has dedicated clinical psychologists who attend the consensus meetings to help interpret the results of the cognitive tests that are given at the home visits by our psychometrists.

Sue McCurry, PhD is a Research Professor Emeritus at the UW and a clinical psychologist specializing in aging and dementia. She has been ACT's neuropsychologist since the beginning of the study in 1994. She has also partnered with ACT to enroll participants in related projects on sleep and dementia care and has coauthored many ACT scientific publications. Most recently, she is co-lead

of Project 1 in the ACT U19 examining how the 24-hour rest-activity cycle (sleep, sedentary behavior, and physical activity) relates to brain and cognitive health. In 2026, Sue will ease into retirement by moving into a consultancy role for ACT. She will continue to do research at UW and maintain her clinical private practice. She loves cats, elephants, trees, and reading for pleasure. She also loves and is very grateful to her team members on ACT and other aging studies, whom she has been privileged to work with for nearly 35 years.

Emily Trittschuh, PhD is a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the UW, and a Geriatric Neuropsychologist and the Associate Director of Education with the Geriatric



Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC) at VA Puget Sound Health Care System. She has worked with the ACT team on research projects related to cognitive aging and dementia since she arrived in Seattle in 2008 and is very excited to be joining the ACT consensus team. She is currently working with Sue

to ensure consistency of our evaluation processes and will take over for Sue upon her retirement. When not spending time with her husband and kids, Emily enjoys running – especially with her large yellow lab, Rocco. She really enjoys travelling and is currently trying to learn Italian.

Send comments or suggestions to:

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