

Adler Imaging Key to Developing New Alzheimer's Diagnostic Test

Philadelphia PET/CT facility took part in research leading to FDA approval of new Alzheimer's imaging agent Amyvid

(April 10, 2012; Jenkintown, PA): Adler Institute for Advanced Imaging, specializing in PET/CT (positron emission tomography/computed tomography), was instrumental in the development of a newly approved pharmaceutical for diagnosing Alzheimer's disease.

On Friday, Eli Lilly and Company and its subsidiary Avid Radiopharmaceuticals, Inc. announced the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval of Florbetapir F-18, a radioactive agent that binds to amyloid plaque in the brain. Amyloid plaque is strongly associated with Alzheimer's disease. The results of a PET/CT scan after an injection of the drug, known by its trade name Amyvid, helps a physician confirm an Alzheimer's diagnosis.

Lee Adler, M.D., Medical Director of Adler Imaging, is recognized for his role as an advisor and investigator in the study that established the effectiveness of diagnosing Alzheimer's with Amyvid. The study was published in the March 2012 edition of The Journal of Nuclear Medicine.

"In the short term, the availability of Florbetapir as an imaging agent for PET/CT will give patients and their families greater clarity as to their diagnosis," said Adler. "It's going to improve their physicians' ability to select the most appropriate treatments.

The approval of Amyvid is not the first time PET/CT scans have helped physicians determine an Alzheimer's diagnosis, but Adler attributes the value of this new drug to early detection. "PET/CT with FDG and blood flow studies have been available for years to help distinguish between fronto-temporal dementia and Alzheimer's," he said. "But they only work in the more advanced stages of the disease. Amyvid has the potential to detect the beta-amyloid plaque at the earliest stages."

The Director of Neuropsychology at Adler Imaging, Karel Kovnat, Ph.D., was also an investigator on the Amyvid study. Kovnat said that another important benefit of PET/CT imaging with Amyvid is to help with ongoing and future research. "We are currently working with a number of pharmaceutical companies developing new and potentially exciting treatments for Alzheimer's disease, all using amyloid imaging."

Adler hopes that Adler Imaging will further consolidate its reputation as the leading provider of PET/CT in the Delaware Valley by becoming one of the first centers in the nation offering Amyvid PET/CT imaging when the drug becomes available in June. He was the one of the first radiologists to interpret Amyvid PET/CT scans and has agreed to serve as a trainer of other radiologists to do the same in a training program that the FDA required Avid to institute in order for approval.

“I’m fortunate in having the opportunity to be one of the first physicians to apply PET, and subsequently PET/CT, to patients with known and suspected cancer. I began my investigations with the modality in the 1980’s,” said Adler. A founding officer of the Academy of Molecular Imaging and a former board member for the Institute of Clinical PET, Adler’s research in Amyvid PET/CT further propels his international reputation in nuclear medicine and diagnostic radiology.

The Adler Institute for Advanced Imaging was opened in May of 2005, the first facility to bring second generation PET/CT scanning to the Philadelphia area. Adler Imaging has taken particular care to create a facility that offers state-of-the art imaging capability as well as an environment designed to put patients at ease. Adler Imaging is operated by Lee P. Adler, MD, an internationally recognized leader in PET and PET/CT research and Dr. Karel Kovnat, a board certified psychologist and specialist in patient care with a strong research background in the uses of PET/CT for cognitive disorders.

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