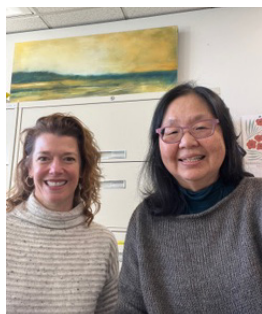


Seattle Institute for Biomedical and Clinical Research

January-March 2025

Spotlight Feature

DEBBY TSUANG, MD & EMILY TRITTSCHUH, PHD



Debby Tsuang, MD, is the Director of the Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC) Memory Disorders Clinic at VA Puget Sound and a Professor in the University of Washington (UW) Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; and **Emily Trittschuh, PhD**, is the GRECC Associate Director for Education and Evaluation and a Professor in the UW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

In a groundbreaking collaboration between the VA and National Institute on Aging (NIA), Drs. Tsuang and Trittschuh are partnering with Dr. Mark Logue at VA Boston to harmonize VA clinical phenotypes for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) with research phenotypic data from the NIA Alzheimer's Disease Sequencing Project (U24 AG074855; Tim Hohman, PhD, MPI, Vanderbilt University Medical Center). The VA's electronic medical record system is one of the largest potential data sources for ADRD research, yet the relevant data about diagnoses and other markers of ADRD—collectively referred to as phenotypes—are challenging to integrate into ongoing research. By making these ADRD diagnoses and phenotypes comparable, investigators in this consortium aim to create a resource for interagency collaborations that will help scientists better understand ADRD risks, improve the timely diagnosis of ADRD, and discover new ADRD treatments. In future efforts, data from the VA's Million Veteran Program will be leveraged to facilitate genetic analyses. This work is an extension of Dr. Tsuang's machine learning studies to find undiagnosed ADRD using VA medical records (I01BX005749) and Dr. Trittschuh's harmonization of psychometric data for the Hohman U24 above, as well as in the AD Neuroimaging Initiative (R01 AG029672), a study of protective genetic factors for AD (R01 AG059716), and other associated work (U01 AG068057).

Dr. Tsuang is also the principal investigator of an NIH R21/R33, which seeks digital biomarkers for the early detection of dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB). Nearly half of patients with DLB experience delays in diagnosis of ~18 months after first reporting symptoms to physicians. Such underdiagnosis delays early treatment efforts, exacerbate caretaker stress, and likely result in high health care utilization. To address this, Dr. Tsuang is longitudinally monitoring activity and sleep in individuals with DLB and mild cognitive impairment (MCI). Her research portfolio focuses on the early diagnosis of dementia, using two separate approaches that include mobile health devices and existing electronic health records. Through these efforts, she hopes to bring cognitive health of aging Veterans to the forefront of Veterans Health Administration.

UPCOMING IN 2025

NIH will require ORCID's and ScienCV-generated biosketches for all Key Personnel. Get started on yours now!

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/>

ScienCV: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>

More Information: <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/changes-coming-2025/common-forms-for-biosketch>

R&D SEMINAR AND JUNIOR INVESTIGATOR Q&A SESSION

Erin K. Kross, MD, Professor, Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine; Director, Cambia Palliative Care Center of Excellence, University of Washington School of Medicine - **January 16, 2025**, Seminar: 12 PM to 1 PM, Junior Investigator Q&A Session: 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM, VA Building 101 Room 1E90 and virtual - Title: *"Evolution of the Jumpstart intervention to promote and improve goals-of-care discussions with patients with serious illness"*