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Brain Health Registry Starts Return Visits for 1500 Members

SAN FRANCISCO – For many people, the start of October means the start of the baseball playoffs. It’s a time of year when runs are more precious, when details stand out, when everything feels just a bit more important. For the Brain Health Registry, the start of this October brings high stakes as well.

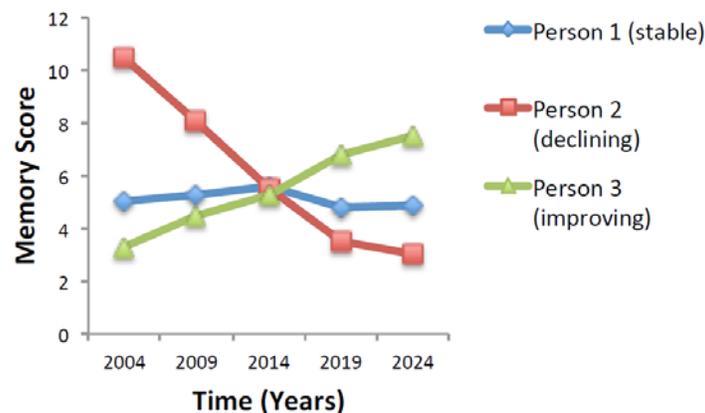
The Registry is sending out the first of its requests, asking members to come back for return visit to answer additional questions and take brain tests. More than 1500 members will receive these requests during the month.

These return visits are important, as they allow the Brain Health Registry’s scientific insights team to track changes in an individual’s health, lifestyle and cognitive functioning over time.

Rachel Nosheny, Ph.D, a key member of the Registry’s scientific insights team, has helped develop the questionnaires used in the process. She often uses a graph to demonstrate why the longitudinal data is so important.

“The graph shows us memory scores for three hypothetical individuals,” Dr. Nosheny said. “In the middle, you can see one point in time – 2014 – when all three individuals have the same memory score. If we only used those scores, one might conclude that all three individuals were in a similar state with respect to brain health. But looking at their scores over time, we see a very different story.”

“We can see that the person represented by blue marks has stable memory scores – not much has changed for them. The person represented by green marks is actually improving. And the person with red marks is showing cognitive decline.”



Nosheny says these kinds of changes might be subtle – so much so that the individual or their closest friends might not even notice the changes. But these are the changes that could be crucial indicators of changes in brain health.

“Many clinical trials need participants who are in the earliest stages of disease,” Dr. Nosheny said. “And the longitudinal data gives us a good shot at identifying some of those individuals. That’s one of the ways we can improve the quality of clinical trials for potential cures to neurological disorders.”

Returning Brain Health Registry members will see small changes to the website, all based on member feedback to improve the experience. Return visits will take less time to complete than the first visit and can be done in stages if preferred.

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