Meet Dr. Lewis Kuller, Principal Investigator at the Pittsburgh Field Center

Dr. Lewis Kuller, principal investigator (PI) at the Pittsburgh Field Center, is University Professor and Chairman of the Department of Epidemiology at the Graduate School of Public Health. Dr. Kuller earned his medical degree from George Washington University in 1959 and a doctorate of public health from Johns Hopkins University in 1966. He joined the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh in 1972 and has spent nearly 30 years researching cardiovascular disease, dementia, diabetes, and women’s health.

Those of you who have participated in the Cardiovascular Health Study (CHS) will recognize Dr. Kuller, who has been the study’s PI since it began in 1989. In addition to GEM and CHS, Dr. Kuller currently plays a leading role in several other studies of memory and the causes of dementia, cardiovascular disease in older women, and health and aging.

Dr. Kuller and his wife, Alice, have three grown children and five grandchildren. Outside of his busy academic life, Dr. Kuller dotes on his garden.

Common Questions about Warfarin, Coumadin, and Aspirin

- **If I start taking warfarin or Coumadin, do I need to stop taking the GEM Study pills?**

  Yes. You should also call your follow-up staff person, or the clinic (412-624-3579), to let us know you’ve stopped taking the GEM Study pills. If you later stop taking warfarin or Coumadin, you may be able to resume taking the GEM Study pills.

- **May I take aspirin while participating in the GEM Study?**

  Yes!

**If you’ve been hospitalized, or if you just want to get in touch with us, call your GEM Study follow-up staff person. Or, if you are unable to reach that person, call the clinic at 412-624-3579.**

Call the University of Pittsburgh if you would like to find out more about participating in the Ginkgo Evaluation of Memory (GEM) Study. We’d love to hear from you!

Janet Bonk
Recruitment Coordinator
800-872-3653
412-624-6926

Spread the word! We still need to enroll new participants in the GEM Study. Tear out this card and give it to a friend or family member who might be interested in joining. Thanks!
Proxies in the GEM Study: A Little Help Goes a Long Way!

In many research studies, participants name a proxy whose role is to provide information about the participant’s health, in the event that they cannot provide it for themselves. However, in the GEM Study, proxies play a different, much more significant role; in GEM, proxies are critical to ensuring that the study results are accurate.

Why is the role of the proxy so crucial? Well, GEM is a study of memory changes or problems that can occur as we age. These changes can affect our ability to complete daily activities, as well as our perception of these abilities. People who have problems with memory or thinking skills often under-report difficulties they may have with everyday activities. The more problems they have with memory and thinking, the more inaccurate their self-report becomes. In addition, people may not even be aware of their own limitations, especially if these limitations are subtle enough to work around. Thus, the proxy in the GEM Study is a checkpoint—an outside opinion of any changes in a participant’s memory and abilities over time.

Like you, your proxy will need to complete questionnaires about your memory, habits, and daily activities every six months for the rest of the study. To get things started, your proxy probably came with you to your first clinic visit; those who couldn’t make it were interviewed in their homes or by phone. We hoped that having your proxy come with you would give him a clear understanding of what study participation requires. Your proxy is not required to attend future clinic visits, but we would love to have her come in with you when she can. If your proxy cannot come to the clinic, we will contact him for a phone interview a few days before your appointment to obtain the information we need for your visit.

We are grateful for the time and effort you and your proxy give to GEM. Together, you are making an important contribution to the mental and physical health of older people. Thank you!

Have you lost the medications you took to your first clinic visit? If so, look in the “GEM” canvas bag we gave you. Lost that? Try the closet—that’s where other participants have found theirs!

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