CERAD – An Overview
The Consortium to Establish a Registry for Alzheimer’s Disease

The Consortium to Establish a Registry for Alzheimer’s Disease (CERAD) was established in 1986 by a grant from the National Institute on Aging (NIA), to standardize procedures for the evaluation and diagnosis of patients with Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Patients and nondemented control subjects were recruited from 24 NIA-sponsored Alzheimer’s Disease Research Centers and other university programs in the US. Using standardized diagnostic criteria and assessment instruments, CERAD subjects were examined at entry and annually thereafter, to observe the natural progression of AD. Autopsy examination of the brain was included, to the extent possible, to obtain neuropathologic confirmation of the clinical diagnosis.

The major standardized instruments developed by CERAD are now used by many AD research centers in the US and abroad, by physicians in clinical practice, and in population-based surveys. They have been translated into Bulgarian, Chinese, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Arabic, Norwegian, Portuguese, and Spanish. Over 100 papers describing CERAD findings have been published in English-speaking scientific medical journals. While focusing on the standardization of assessment instruments and methods, the CERAD study obtained information on the natural history of AD, its clinical, neuropsychological, and neuropathological correlations; its family history; and behavioral and associated personality changes. Data were obtained on 1,094 carefully screened, nationally distributed White and African-American patients with AD and on 463 nondemented controls, many of whom were observed for periods as long as seven years. The clinical diagnosis of AD was confirmed in 87% of autopsied cases.