

# BRAIN TUMOR DRUG STUDIES SEEK PATIENTS

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Culicchia Neurological Clinic is participating in two multi-center national trials of Temodar, active against many cancers, including brain tumors. While Temodar is still a relatively new drug, it is actively investigated for use in many scenarios.

"The first trial will study Temodar for a brain tumor called oligodendroglioma," commented neuro-oncologist Dr. Syed Nasir of Culicchia Neurological Clinic. "Oligodendroglioma is very responsive to chemotherapy. Our study assesses different doses of Temodar before the use of radiation."

The second study will track the use of Temodar in cases of brain metastasis, when cancer spreads and involves the brain. It is sometimes a difficult condition to treat and often chemotherapy does not work very well. Studies are showing good results with Temodar in brain metastasis.

The oligodendroglioma study is open and accepting patients for enrollment. The brain metastasis study is expected to open by third week of January 2003. If you are interested in further information please reach Helen Neil at 504-349-6976.

## Do High Fat Diets Diminish Dementia?

High dietary intakes of total fat, saturated and trans fats and cholesterol have long been associated with such health risk factors as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and several forms of cancer. But there appears to be at least one devastating health condition that cannot yet be tied to the percentage of fat one consumes: dementia.

According to a study reported in *Neurology*, dietary intake of fat was not associated with an increased risk of dementia. Previous research has suggested that fat may be involved in the development of dementia. Furthermore, specific fatty acids, such as those found in olive oil, vegetable oils and fatty fish, were associated with a lowered risk of dementia.

Dr. Michael Puente, neurologist with Culicchia Neurological Clinic feels the question is still an open one. "The evidence is very sketchy," he says, "but it does appear that a healthy diet may play a role in the development of dementia long-term perhaps by reducing the risk of the co-morbidity of vascular disease, along the lines of a vascular (multi-infarct) dementia or mixed dementia."

## SEEK CARE IMMEDIATELY IF STROKE IS SUSPECTED

Time is brain and timing can't be emphasized enough for those who suffer a stroke or even suspect they're having a stroke. Devastating effects can be prevented if a patient is treated within the first three hours following a stroke, with six hours being the maximum time allowance.

However, reducing the time interval from first symptoms to diagnosis and therapy is a monumental obstacle. The National Stroke Association ([www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)) reports that 42 percent of stroke patients wait as long as 13-24 hours on average before seeking medical care because victims do not recognize stroke symptoms.

Culicchia Neurological Clinic's Walter Truax, M.D. feels that patient education is key. Houston and other cities have improved outcomes thanks to patient education. "Patients need to learn to call 911 at the first sign of stroke," explains Dr. Truax. "The ambulance attendants should be told, 'I think I am having a stroke' and upon arrival to the emergency room, the ER personnel should be told, 'I think I am having a stroke. I want the clot busting drug.' This will help identify the problem and will give the patient priority in a busy emergency room," says Truax, who is also Medical Director of West Jefferson Rehab Center and Stroke Team.

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