

REVIEW ARTICLE

Current directions in tau research: Highlights from Tau 2020

Claire Sexton¹  | Heather Snyder¹ | Dirk Beher² | Adam L. Boxer³ |
Pat Brannelly⁴ | Jean-Pierre Brion⁵ | Luc Buée⁶ | Angela M. Cacace⁷ |
Gaël Chételat⁸ | Martin Citron⁹ | Sarah L. DeVos¹⁰ | Kristophe Diaz¹¹ |
Howard H. Feldman¹² | Bess Frost¹³ | Alison M. Goate¹⁴ | Michael Gold¹⁵ |
Bradley Hyman¹⁶ | Keith Johnson¹⁷ | Celeste M. Karch¹⁸ | Diana R. Kerwin¹⁹ |
Walter J. Koroshetz²⁰ | Irene Litvan²¹ | Huw R. Morris²² | Catherine J. Mummery²³ |
James Mutamba²⁴ | Marc C. Patterson²⁵ | Yakeel T. Quiroz²⁶ | Gil D. Rabinovici²⁷ |
Amy Rommel²⁸ | Melanie B. Shulman²⁹ | Leticia M. Toledo-Sherman²⁸ |
Stacie Weninger³⁰ | Kristin R. Wildsmith³¹ | Susan L. Worley³² | Maria C. Carrillo¹

¹ Alzheimer's Association, Chicago, Illinois, USA

² Asceneuron, Lausanne, Switzerland

³ Memory and Aging Center, Department of Neurology, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, California, USA

⁴ Alzheimer's Disease Data Initiative, Kirkland, WI, USA

⁵ Laboratory of Histology, Neuroanatomy and Neuropathology, Faculty of Medicine, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

⁶ Univ Lille, Inserm, CHU-Lille, Lille Neuroscience and Cognition, Place de Verdun, Lille, France

⁷ Neuroscience and Platform Biology, Arvinas, New Haven, USA

⁸ Normandie Univ, UNICAEN, INSERM, U1237, PhIND "Physiopathology and Imaging of Neurological Disorders", Institut Blood and Brain @ Caen-Normandie, Cyceron, Caen, France

⁹ Neuroscience TA, Braine l'Alleud, UCB Biopharma, Brussels, Belgium

¹⁰ Translational Sciences, Denali Therapeutics, San Francisco, California, USA

¹¹ Cure PSP, New York, New York, USA

¹² Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study, Department of Neurosciences, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California, USA

¹³ Sam & Ann Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies, Glenn Biggs Institute for Alzheimer's & Neurodegenerative Disorders, Department of Cell Systems & Anatomy, University of Texas Health San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas, USA

¹⁴ Ronald M. Loeb Center for Alzheimer's Disease, Department of Neuroscience, Department of Genetics and Genomic Sciences, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, New York, USA

¹⁵ AbbVie, Neurosciences Development, North Chicago, Illinois, USA

¹⁶ Department of Neurology, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

¹⁷ Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

¹⁸ Department of Psychiatry, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri, USA

¹⁹ Kerwin Medical Center, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas, USA

²⁰ National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Bethesda, Maryland, USA

²¹ Parkinson and Other Movement Disorders Center, Department of Neurosciences, University of California San Diego, San Diego, California, USA

²² Department of Clinical and Movement Neuroscience, UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, London, UK

²³ Dementia Research Centre, National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, University College London, London, UK

²⁴ Longwood Fund, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2021 The Authors. *Alzheimer's & Dementia* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of Alzheimer's Association.

²⁵ Departments of Neurology, Pediatrics and Medical Genetics, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA

²⁶ Departments of Neurology and Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

²⁷ Memory & Aging Center, Departments of Neurology, Radiology & Biomedical Imaging, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, California, USA

²⁸ Tau Consortium, Rainwater Charitable Foundation, Fort Worth, Texas, USA

²⁹ Neurodegeneration Development Unit, Biogen, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

³⁰ FBRI, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

³¹ Department of Biomarker Development, Genentech, South San Francisco, California, USA

³² Independent science writer, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, USA

Correspondence

Claire Sexton, Alzheimer's Association,
Chicago, IL, USA.

E-mail: csexton@alz.org

Abstract

Studies supporting a strong association between tau deposition and neuronal loss, neurodegeneration, and cognitive decline have heightened the allure of tau and tau-related mechanisms as therapeutic targets. In February 2020, leading tau experts from around the world convened for the first-ever Tau2020 Global Conference in Washington, DC, co-organized and cosponsored by the Rainwater Charitable Foundation, the Alzheimer's Association, and CurePSP. Representing academia, industry, government, and the philanthropic sector, presenters and attendees discussed recent advances and current directions in tau research. The meeting provided a unique opportunity to move tau research forward by fostering global partnerships among academia, industry, and other stakeholders and by providing support for new drug discovery programs, groundbreaking research, and emerging tau researchers. The meeting also provided an opportunity for experts to present critical research-advancing tools and insights that are now rapidly accelerating the pace of tau research.

KEYWORDS

Alzheimer's, biomarkers, neurodegeneration, tau, therapeutics

1 | TAU STRUCTURE AND BIOLOGY

The earliest discoveries regarding the structure and biology of assembled tau protein occurred in the context of Alzheimer's disease (AD) research and accumulated slowly over many decades. Nearly 60 years passed between the detection, by Alois Alzheimer, of intracellular neurofibrillary tangles (NFTs) in the brains of AD patients¹ and the subsequent discovery that NFTs contain paired helical filaments (PHFs).^{2,3} Another two decades passed before researchers determined that the microtubule-associated protein tau⁴ is an integral component of PHFs.⁵⁻⁸ This series of discoveries became a foundation for further exploration of tau's structural diversity and wide range of functions and behavior in both physiologic and pathologic states. It is now clear that the highly flexible structure of this natively disordered protein allows it to participate in numerous signaling pathways and engage in a surprising number of physiological functions.^{9,10} Yet, under pathologic conditions, tau monomers undergo conformational changes that lead to the development of abnormal filamentous inclusions, which in turn cause the degeneration of neurons and glial cells and result in a range of neurodegenerative diseases now collectively known as tauopathies.¹¹⁻¹⁴

Tau protein is in the central and peripheral nervous systems in a variety of intracellular compartments as well as in extracellular locations,

including the interstitial fluid and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). It is most abundant in neuronal axons, where it plays a role in promoting the polymerization, assembly, and stability of microtubules, which are essential for axonal transport as well as for maintaining the structural integrity of neurons.^{4,11,15-17} Tau is a member of the microtubule-associated protein (MAP) family, and it is encoded by a single gene, *MAPT*, which is located on human chromosome 17q21.31. Alternative messenger RNA (mRNA) splicing of exons from *MAPT* results in the expression of six different isoforms of tau protein in the human brain.¹⁸ Each isoform comprises four parts: an N-terminal domain, which may play a role in regulating distance between microtubules; a proline-rich domain that plays a role in cell signaling and interactions with protein kinases and WW domain-containing proteins, with growing evidence that WW domain-containing proteins bind at the proline-rich domain; a microtubule-binding domain; and a C-terminal domain, which may be involved in the regulation of microtubule polymerization.^{9,14,19} The isoforms differ at their N-terminals, coded by exons 2 and 3, and in their microtubule-binding regions, coded by exon 10. Alternative splicing of N-terminal exons 2 and 3 results in the addition of a 29-amino-acid sequence (1N), a less commonly expressed replication with a total of 58 amino acids (2N), or an absence of additional amino acids (0N). In the microtubule-binding compartment, the inclusion or exclusion of exon 10 results in

isoforms with four repeated microtubule-binding domains (4R) or with three microtubule-binding domains (3R), respectively. In the healthy adult human brain, 3R and 4R isoforms tend to be equally expressed, with few exceptions.^{18,20} Tauopathies can be divided into three groups based on the isoforms present in their filamentous inclusions: 3R+4R tauopathies, 3R tauopathies, and 4R tauopathies (see Table 1).

1.1 | Diversity of tau filament conformers

The first structural analyses of PHF domains,^{5,7,23} which established a foundation for discovering relationships between tau structure and function, revealed that when full-length tau assembles into filaments, the repeats form the filament core, and the N-terminal and C-terminal domains form the “fuzzy coat.” The discovery that the core repeats of tau filaments also bind to microtubules led to an early hypothesis that an important physiologic function of tau (microtubule assembly) and tau's assembly into pathologic filaments may be mutually exclusive events.²¹ Newer research involving the use of cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM) is revealing an astonishing diversity of tau filament structures among individuals with AD, Pick's disease, chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), and corticobasal degeneration (CBD).^{24–28} These differences exist between diseases; tau filament structures are the same for different individuals with the same disease. Such findings support the hypothesis that distinct conformers of filamentous tau may ultimately help explain not only the specific neuropathological lesions or types of tau inclusions associated with each tauopathy, but also distinct patterns of tau accumulation, progression of disease, and variations in clinical presentations among individuals with tauopathies.

Structural analyses of other proteinopathies will likely provide similar insights. Indeed, at Tau 2020, while accepting the \$250,000 Rainwater Prize for outstanding innovation in neurodegenerative research, Michel Goedert described for the first time high-resolution cryo-EM structures of α -synuclein filaments from the human brain, which may ultimately provide important information about multiple-system atrophy (MSA). These filaments were from putamen of five individuals with MSA, a synucleinopathy that affects both nerve cells and glial cells, chiefly oligodendrocytes. The structures obtained by his team and that of Sjors Scheres differ from those determined by researchers using α -synuclein filaments assembled from recombinant proteins.²⁹ Because Goedert and Scheres previously had shown that the structures of tau filaments from the human brain differ from those of filaments assembled from full-length recombinant tau upon induction of aggregation with heparin,^{27,30} it follows that filaments formed from recombinant proteins may not be ideal for structure-based drug design and related experiments. Findings from research by Goedert and Schweighauser et al.²⁹ may contribute to the development of specific imaging ligands for synucleinopathies, a major unmet clinical need.

An increasingly important area of tau research involves a deeper examination of how and why the morphologies of tau inclusions that characterize various tauopathies vary dramatically, even when their constituent tau fibrils contain the same isoforms. For example, although 4R tau is found in the tau inclusions of progressive supranu-

HIGHLIGHTS

- In February 2020, leading tau experts convened for the Tau2020 Global Conference.
- Recent advances span tau biology, propagation, biomarkers, and therapeutics.
- Cryo-electron microscopy studies have revealed the diversity of tau filament structures.
- Tau positron emission tomography tracers allow in vivo visualization of tau deposition in the human brain.
- Therapeutic approaches aim to prevent the production, aggregation, spread, or deposition of pathologic tau.

RESEARCH IN CONTEXT

1. **Systematic review:** The authors report the updates and advances in tau research presented at the Tau2020 Global Conference.
2. **Interpretation:** Significant advances spanning tau biology, propagation, biomarkers, and therapeutics are contributing to our understanding of tauopathies.
3. **Future directions:** At Tau 2020, the tau research community demonstrated an enthusiastic commitment to advancing the development of anti-tau therapeutics, necessary new imaging agents and biomarkers, and the critical tools that will be needed to facilitate anti-tau drug development. Tau2022 will provide a further update on progress, including on the potential of tau and tau-related mechanisms as therapeutic targets.

clear palsy (PSP), CBD, and argyrophilic grain disease (AGD),³¹ CBD is characterized by the formation of “astrocytic plaques” (tau filaments in a corona-like arrangement in astrocytes), PSP by “tufted astrocytes” (long, thin radial processes in astrocytes), and AGD by argyrophilic granular inclusions in neuronal dendrites.^{9,31–33} A better understanding of disease-specific tau structures will be instrumental for the development of tau imaging ligands that recognize disease-specific tau filaments for diagnostic and clinical testing in primary tauopathies. Further scrutiny of posttranslational modifications and other processes that result in a wide range of inclusions unique to specific tauopathies will likely have important implications for the development of new treatments.

1.2 | Posttranslational modifications and noncanonical functions of tau

The classification of tau as a microtubule binding protein and the nearly exclusive focus on its role in promoting the assembly of axonal microtubules during early decades of research likely delayed the

TABLE 1 3R+4R, 3R, and 4R tauopathies

3R+4R tauopathies	3R tauopathies	4R tauopathies
Alzheimer's disease	Pick's disease	Argyrophilic grain disease
Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis/Parkinsonism-dementia complex	Familial frontotemporal dementia and Parkinsonism (some <i>MAPT</i> mutations, such as G272V and Q336R)	Corticobasal degeneration
Anti-IgLON5-related tauopathy		Guadeloupean Parkinsonism
Caribbean Parkinsonism		Globular glial tauopathy
Chronic traumatic encephalopathy		Huntington's disease
Diffuse neurofibrillary tangles with calcification		Progressive supranuclear palsy
Down syndrome		SLC9a-related Parkinsonism
Familial British dementia		Tau astrogliaopathy
Familial Danish dementia		Familial frontotemporal dementia and Parkinsonism (some <i>MAPT</i> mutations, such as P301L and P301S, all known intronic mutations, and many coding region mutations in exon 10)
Niemann-Pick disease, type C		
Non-Guamanian motor neuron disease with neurofibrillary tangles		
Postencephalitic Parkinsonism		
Primary age-related tauopathy		
Progressive ataxia and palatal tremor		
Tangle-only dementia		
Familial frontotemporal dementia and Parkinsonism (some <i>MAPT</i> mutations, such as V337M and R406W)		

Notes: In some 3R+4R tauopathies, including Alzheimer's disease and chronic traumatic encephalopathy, all six isoforms can be found in disease filaments. In other tauopathies, only some isoforms are present in tau filaments.^{21,22.}

investigation of other potential biologic functions that may be attributed to tau.³⁴ A deeper exploration of not only the structure and distribution of tau, but also its subcellular locations, post-translational modifications, and tauopathy-specific clusters of tau isoforms has begun to improve our understanding of atypical or noncanonical functions of tau protein, as well as the role of tau in neurodegeneration.^{10,14,34}

Tau undergoes many posttranslational modifications in both physiologic and pathologic states, including phosphorylation, acetylation, methylation, ubiquitination, and truncation.^{13,14,35} In research to date, the greatest focus has been on the role of abnormal hyperphosphorylation of tau in tau-mediated disease.¹⁰ Tau phosphorylation has mainly been explored through the use of phosphorylation-dependent anti-tau antibodies (AD2, AT180, AT8, CP13, PHF1), some of them (AT100, Alz-50, MC1) recognizing specifically pathologic tau species.³⁶⁻⁴¹ A wide variety of stressors, including ischemia and trauma, can lead to tau phosphorylation in the brain.^{42,43} More recently, a high-sodium diet has been found to trigger specific immune activation that results in tau phosphorylation in the brain and subsequent cognitive impairment.⁴⁴ Other posttranslational modifications, such as acetylation and ubiquitination, have also been shown to contribute either directly or indirectly to events that lead to neurodegeneration.⁴⁵ Recent research examining the role of ubiquitination in CBD, for example, suggests that

posttranslational modifications of tau may play a role in the structural diversity of various tau strains.²⁴ Other posttranslational modifications appear to influence the stability of intracellular and extracellular tau under physiologic conditions, and a closer examination of these is leading to new insights regarding the impact of tau pathology.

We have recently gained greater insight into the effects of tau on and in the nucleus.^{46,47} Physiologic tau is present in the nucleus, where it binds AT-rich satellite DNA and protects DNA from peroxidation-induced DNA damage.⁴⁸ Consistent with a role in maintaining genomic architecture, physiologic forms of tau co-localize with nucleoli⁴⁹ and pericentromeric heterochromatin, and tau knockout mice have reduced levels of proteins and histone modifications that maintain constitutive heterochromatin.⁵⁰ Pathologic forms of tau in the cytoplasm also negatively affect nuclear function through their effects on the actin cytoskeleton and microtubule dynamics. In *Drosophila* and induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC)-derived neuron models of tauopathy, the effects of tau on actin and microtubules cause the nuclear envelope to involute and the nucleoskeleton to weaken.^{51,52} In neuronal nuclei from *post mortem* human brain tissue of patients with AD, invaginations of the nuclear envelope contain filamentous actin and disease-associated phosphorylated tau.⁵¹ Pathogenic forms of cytoplasmic tau are reported to affect nuclear pore localization, function, and nucleocytoplasmic trafficking;^{52,53} induce widespread

decondensation of constitutive heterochromatin;⁵⁴ promote DNA damage;^{55,56} alter RNA stability and RNA export;⁵⁷⁻⁵⁹ promote ribosome instability;⁶⁰ and activate transposable elements.^{61,62}

A wide range of additional novel physiologic roles for tau are currently under investigation, including its roles in enabling long labile domains;⁶³ modulating insulin signaling;⁶⁴ regulating myelination;^{10,65,66} and regulating learning, memory, and synaptic plasticity.⁶⁷ Further examination of these roles will likely have important implications for drug development and will likely improve our ability to discriminate between physiologic and pathologic tau. An important goal moving forward will be to determine which posttranslational modifications play a direct role in triggering tau aggregation in neurodegenerative disease. For example, although hyperphosphorylation of tau can interfere with its role in microtubule assembly,⁶⁸ whether hyperphosphorylation of tau triggers human aggregation of tau has yet to be proven.²¹ Meanwhile, evidence is emerging that even within a single entity such as AD, different posttranslational modifications lead to different patterns of tau uptake, which in turn affect the rate of progression of clinical disease.⁶⁹ Given the “drugability” of enzymes that affect posttranslational modifications and the structural and functional cross-talk between these, deciphering the posttranslational modification code of tau will create opportunities for drug development.^{68,70}

2 | PHENOTYPIC AND GENETIC DIVERSITY OF TAUOPATHIES

Without genetic information, imaging, or other biomarkers, the ability to diagnose a specific tauopathy and predict disease course can be exceedingly difficult, because tauopathies frequently have overlapping signs and symptoms.^{9,71} Indeed, many tauopathies still can be confirmed only at autopsy. Comprehensive neurologic and neuropsychologic evaluations aid in the recognition of clinical syndromes, and based on these evaluations alone, clinicians often can establish cognitive profiles that enable them to select from among competing clinical syndromes.^{46,71} Increasingly, imaging studies and other biomarkers are being used to confirm clinical findings.⁷² Imaging studies, together with *post mortem* studies, also have contributed enormously to understanding the underlying causes of specific symptoms by strengthening the link between unique clusters of symptoms associated with distinct tauopathies and corresponding anatomic regions of the brain vulnerable to a given disease.^{72,73} In AD, for example, the early symptoms of impaired episodic memory correspond to tau burden in the medial lobe,⁷² visual agnosia corresponds to tau burden in regions of the visual cortex (Brodmann areas 18 and 37),^{74,75} and ideomotor and dressing apraxia correspond to the accumulation of tau aggregates in the anterior cingulate cortex.⁷⁶

Some of the phenotypic variability among tauopathies, as well as an increased risk for some of them, can be traced to genetic mutations that promote specific tauopathies, to modifier genes, or to other anomalies in genomic architecture. Efforts to sort tauopathies genetically began with the discovery that dominantly inherited mutations in *MAPT* were

associated with a form of frontotemporal dementia and Parkinsonism linked to chromosome 17 (FTDP-17).⁷⁷⁻⁷⁹ Because FTDP-17, now considered a familial subtype of frontotemporal lobar degeneration with tau pathology (FTLD-tau),⁸⁰ is associated with tau inclusions in neurons and glial cells but not with amyloidopathy, this discovery provided the earliest evidence that tau aggregates alone could lead to neurodegeneration and dementia.

During the same decade, evidence emerged that pathologic tau associated with AD was more strongly correlated with disease progression, cognitive decline, and neuropathologic severity than amyloidopathy, and in turn that amyloidopathy was necessary but not sufficient to explain AD.⁸¹ Subsequent PSP studies helped to confirm not only links between specific *MAPT* mutations and various tauopathies, but also that pathologic tau can be a direct cause of neurodegeneration.⁷⁸

Neurodegenerative diseases in which tau is known to play a primary role, or primary tauopathies, include FTLD-tau, Pick's disease, PSP, CBD, AGD, and CTE. In contrast, so-called secondary tauopathies are those in which pathogenic tau formation develops in response to other pathogenic proteins or pathologic events.⁹ Amyloid beta (A β) and α -synuclein, both of which have been reviewed extensively, are two examples of pathogenic proteins that have been regarded as stimulators of tau, resulting in the secondary tauopathies of AD and Lewy body dementia, respectively. It is important to note that no known pathogenic mutations in *MAPT* cause neuropathologically defined AD or other secondary tauopathies. Other secondary tauopathies include Niemann-Pick disease type C, Down syndrome, subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, and myotonic dystrophy. Although these differ significantly with regard to clinical manifestations, several secondary tauopathies have some common underlying causes, such as impaired endosomal-lysosomal trafficking, and also have in common that they may be preventable.

To date, more than 50 *MAPT* mutations have been associated with neurodegenerative disease. These mutations are believed to play a role in enhancing tau aggregation, disrupting tau protein structure, and/or interfering with the mRNA splicing of *MAPT* exons. *MAPT* mutations concentrated in exons 9 to 12 are believed to account for approximately 5% of cases of FTLD-tau.²¹ Currently, there are no known correlations between *MAPT* mutations and posttranslational modifications of tau.²¹

In addition to direct mutations in the *MAPT* gene, different haplotypes of *MAPT* also have been implicated in the development of primary tauopathies. Two major haplotypes, H1 and H2, can be traced to an ancestral inversion of a large DNA fragment at 17q21.31, which encompasses *MAPT* and a number of other genes.^{82,83} Inheritance of the H1 haplotype is associated with an increased risk for PSP, CBD, Parkinson's disease (PD), AGD, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS),²¹ but is not associated with Pick's disease.⁸⁴⁻⁸⁶ In contrast, inheritance of the H2 haplotype is believed to confer protection against PSP, CBD, PD, and ALS.⁸⁷ The mechanism by which the H2 haplotype confers protection remains unclear; however, some evidence suggests that this haplotype is associated with increased inclusion of exon 3.⁸⁸ Newer research is examining the complexities of subhaplotypes and their contribution to risks for specific phenotypes.

Some evidence suggests that subhaplotypes of H1 result in differential risks for some disorders.^{85,88,89}

Subhaplotypes of the 17q locus have distinctly different associations for PD and PSP. Subhaplotype H1c specifically seems to associate with PSP but not with PD. Early evidence suggests that in iPSC-derived neurons and microglia from H1c haplotype families, chromatin is in an open state near single nucleotide polymorphisms that associate with PSP; however, this is not the case in iPSC-derived astrocytes. Conversely, three other subhaplotypes (H1.1–H1.3) appear to associate with PD through expression of the astrocytic marker LRRK37A, with some variants being protective, and others increasing risk for PD.⁹⁰

2.1 | Role of genetics in research-advancing tools and insights

A major goal in tau research is to determine the intricate steps by which mutations lead to tau aggregation and accumulation, and in turn to neurodegeneration and neuronal and glial cell death. Mouse and other animal models have proven inadequate for the study of tauopathies, largely because counterparts of human tauopathies do not exist in these models and because human tauopathies are difficult to mimic in these models. For example, although 3R and 4R isoforms are equally expressed in normal adult human brains, the expression of isoforms as well as the range of isoforms in animal brains differ dramatically.^{91–93}

Because the inability to adequately capture the complexity of human *MAPT* mutations in animal models represents a significant barrier to the study of human tauopathies, researchers in the field are turning to the use of iPSCs. A recent project co-led by Celeste Karch, Alison Goate, and Sally Temple, involving the collection of fibroblasts, iPSCs, and neural precursor cells from individuals with a range of primary tauopathies, already has become an important tool for tau researchers. This team of researchers generated their collection from 140 individuals with *MAPT* mutations or risk variants, PSP, CBD, and normal cognition. They successfully generated 31 iPSC lines from *MAPT* mutation carriers, noncarrier family members, and autopsy-confirmed PSP patients and 33 genome-engineered iPSCs that were corrected or mutagenized. Together, the team developed a unique resource comprising fibroblasts, iPSCs, and neural progenitor cells coupled with comprehensive clinical histories that can be accessed by the scientific community for disease modeling and the development of novel therapeutics for tauopathies.⁹⁴

One goal of current research is to identify gene variants that may play a role in the progression of various tauopathies. Recent research conducted by Edwin Jabbari and Huw Morris led to the discovery that a gene variant close to *LRRK2*, which is also associated with PD, likely plays a significant role in PSP progression.⁹⁵ The team conducted a genome-wide association study (GWAS) of 1001 people comprising one clinical cohort (individuals from the Progressive Supranuclear Palsy-Cortico-Basal Syndrome-Multiple System Atrophy, or PROSPECT, study in the United Kingdom) and one *post mortem* cohort (samples from brain banks in the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany) with the goal of discovering genetic variants that might influence progression of PSP and also might represent drug tar-

gets. They demonstrated that variation at the *LRRK2* locus determines the length of survival in individuals with PSP, from the onset of motor symptoms until death, likely through the regulation of gene expression. Their work suggests that modulation of proteostasis and neuroinflammation by *LRRK2* inhibitors might possibly have a therapeutic role in both PSP and PD.

Findings from recent studies that aim to identify potentially protective mutations in AD and other tauopathies also may eventually become a valuable tool for other researchers in the field. Families with autosomal dominant mutations, for example, provide a unique opportunity to study disease progression from preclinical to clinical stages, because carriers of these mutations are genetically determined to develop dementia. These families also may help develop new and more sensitive measures for early detection and help test the implementation of early interventions in clinical trials. Recent research led by Yakeel T. Quiroz at Harvard Medical School reported associations among amyloid and tau deposits using positron emission tomography (PET) imaging and episodic memory measures in cognitively unimpaired carriers of presenilin 1 (*PSEN1*) E280A mutation, several decades before clinical onset.^{96,97} They also reported on the first case from the *PSEN1* E280A kindred who developed mild cognitive impairment (MCI) in her 70s, three decades after the estimated age of clinical onset for this kindred. When the patient was examined in the study by Quiroz et al.,⁹⁶ she had early MCI and very high brain amyloid, but limited tau tangle and neurodegenerative measurements. Genetic analysis revealed that she had two copies of the apolipoprotein E (*APOE*) ε3 Christchurch (R136S) mutation, suggesting that this genetic variant is protective by reducing tau pathology and neurodegeneration in the presence of high amyloid pathology.⁹⁸ Future longitudinal studies of these populations will be needed to further characterize the biomarker trajectory of specific genetic mutations. Much likely will be learned from “escapees” of autosomal dominant mutations—those who remain unimpaired at older ages. Quiroz et al.⁹⁶ are also characterizing newly identified Colombian families with *MAPT* mutations leading to frontotemporal dementia (FTD). They plan to extend their studies to include more families with early-onset dementia.

CRISPR-Cas9, a technology that enables researchers to edit parts of the genome by altering its DNA sequence, may prove to be another remarkably useful tool in tau research. At Tau 2020, Patrick Hsu received the Rainwater Charitable Foundation's innovative early career scientist award for his work involving the correction of *MAPT* mutations using CRISPR editing to repair defective tau splicing in neurons. Using a novel RNA-targeting CRISPR system that would no longer induce permanent, and at times unwanted, changes to the genetic code, he successfully targeted *MAPT* RNA to correct splicing imbalances and reduced pathologic tau isoforms in neuronal models of FTD.⁹⁹

3 | TAU PROPAGATION AND HYPOTHETICAL MECHANISMS OF CELL DEATH

The sequential emergence of tau pathology in different areas of the brain, which has been shown to occur in disease-specific, stereotypical patterns in several tauopathies, has been attributed to the vulnerability

or susceptibility of various regions of the brain to a particular disease process.¹⁰⁰ Alongside theories of regional vulnerability, more recent experimental evidence has suggested that propagation might occur in a prion-like manner, whereby abnormal tau seeds are templated and transferred from donor cells to recipient cells.^{31,101–103} Although a growing number of newer studies have supported the latter hypothesis, several steps in this hypothesized process remain unclear.³¹ Indeed, as yet, tau pathology has not been proven to have several prion-specific characteristics, which include not only cell-to-cell transmission but also infectious transmission from one tissue to another and transmission between organisms.^{22,31,104} A better understanding of the events that lead to the formation of tau filaments and insoluble tau aggregates, as well as the detailed events that trigger tau seeding, templated aggregation, and release and uptake in neuronal cells, will be necessary to solve the problems posed by various theoretical mechanisms of tau propagation.^{22,31}

Numerous studies have demonstrated evidence of tau-induced seeding, or the induction of aggregation by abnormal tau,^{105–108} and some of these also have shown evidence of templated aggregation.^{105,109,110} Yet, these studies have so far involved only experimental models, in most cases involving the injection of human brain homogenates into transgenic mice, or the treatment of cultured cells with similar brain extracts. To date, there is limited evidence of templated seeding activity in tau aggregates obtained from individuals with tauopathies, although some researchers have used sophisticated biosensor assays to detect tau seeds in brain homogenates and CSF of individuals with AD and Pick's disease that appear to be capable of inducing aggregation.^{111–114}

3.1 | Tau secretion and uptake

Substantial evidence suggests that tau is secreted under normal physiologic conditions,¹¹⁵ and that tau exists outside cells in the absence of tau pathology or cell death.^{116–118} However, whether this physiologic secretion of tau plays any role in the propagation of tau pathology is unknown. Under normal conditions, most tau is secreted in a free, monomeric form, and its release may be mediated by vesicles such as exosomes and ectosomes. This process is known to be regulated by neuronal activity and sleep-wake cycles and may suggest an as yet poorly understood physiologic function of tau.^{31,119–121} Transcellular transfer of tau has been demonstrated in cultured cells and in mice,^{108,118,122} but the degree to which processes observed in these studies reflect the transfer of pathologic tau in the human brain is yet to be determined. Research examining the mechanisms that might regulate the uptake of tau into cells, and the mechanisms by which tau release and subsequent uptake of tau leads to neuronal damage, has been limited. The role of extracellular vesicles in tau transfer has been recently highlighted.¹²³ A few studies have demonstrated that tau can bind to receptors on cells, such as heparan sulfate proteoglycans (HSPGs), amyloid precursor protein,^{124–126} and low-density lipoprotein receptor-related protein (LRP),¹²⁷ and subsequently may gain entry into the cells by means of receptor-mediated endocytosis.

Some studies also have shown that tau may trigger damage in receiving neuronal cells by activating signal transduction pathways that lead to Ca^{2+} release.¹²⁸

Recent research elucidated how tau proteins can be taken up in cultured human neurons by binding to the LRP1 on the surface of these cells and demonstrated that LRP1 controls the endocytosis of tau as well as its subsequent spread.¹²⁷ After knocking out various cell-surface receptors, these researchers discovered that H4 neuroglioma cells and iPSC-derived neurons without LRP1 receptors were unable to endocytose tau in the form of oligomers or monomers and partially prevented fibril uptake. In contrast, knocking out other members of the low-density lipoprotein receptor family, including LRP1 homologs, did not interfere with tau uptake. Previous research indicating that HSPGs played a role in mediating tau uptake showed that some tau still can gain access to neuronal cells even after HSPGs are knocked out.¹²⁶ HSPGs are a common low-affinity, high-capacity binding site for LRP ligands, and it will be important to investigate how they may interact, which may indicate that they bind tau in a cooperative manner. The finding that LRP1 is a key regulator of tau spread in the brain suggests that it is a potential target for the treatment of diseases involving tau spread and aggregation.¹²⁷ More research will be required to determine the detailed mechanisms by which LRP1 binds to tau.

3.2 | Potential mechanisms of toxicity and cell death

It is generally assumed that the propagation of tau leads directly to neuronal toxicity, the dysfunction of neuronal networks, and the death of neuronal and glial cells.³¹ However, the specific events and mechanisms underlying such toxicity and cell death, and the degree to which distinct pathologic tau species may use different mechanisms, remain unclear. Potential modes of toxicity explored to date have included the disruption of axonal transport and various synaptic defects.³¹ However, some studies have shown a lack of neurodegeneration despite demonstrated propagation of tau aggregates.¹²⁹ Thus, how exactly propagation of pathologic tau is related to cell death has remained an unanswered question.

Brelstaff et al. recently reported that neurons containing tau inclusions, when under stress, signal nearby phagocytes to engulf and dispose of these neurons while they are still alive.¹³⁰ The authors examined living neurons with tau inclusions from P301S-tau mice, which released phosphatidylserine that in turn signaled cocultured phagocytes (BV2 cells and microglia) to identify them and begin the process of phagocytosis. The neurons induced activated microglia to secrete the opsonin milk-fat-globule EGF-factor-8 (MFG8) and nitric oxide (NO) to facilitate engulfment. The authors noted that neurons with tau inclusions can be rescued when secretion of MFG8 and NO is prevented. Brelstaff et al. also noted that these neurons, with tau inclusions, are among a long list of cells that undergo phagocytosis while still alive as part of a homeostatic mechanism aimed at regulating cell populations.¹³⁰ The finding that phagocytosis of live neurons containing tau inclusions occurs may have implications for the development of

anti-tau therapeutics. For example, a method for preventing phagocytosis may preserve neurons for treatments that inhibit tau aggregation and toxicity.

3.3 | Reconciling propagation theories

There is a growing consensus that the spread of tau pathology in the brain can be attributed to both the selective vulnerability of various neuronal populations to pathologic processes¹³¹⁻¹³⁴ and to the spread of tau pathology by means of a prion-like mechanism.^{31,100,135-141} Although these were initially regarded as competing theories, recent findings suggest that these theories are not incompatible. Structural and functional connectivity studies assessing brain connectivity and networks have been used to predict how tau will spread, and some studies have shown that tau spreads throughout brain networks, in areas where functionally strong and spatially short connections increase the likelihood of tau seeding and spread.^{138,142} Recent multimodal neuroimaging studies have shown that future tau accumulation and neurodegeneration in AD could be predicted by taking into account the specific connectivity of the epicenter (i.e., the region where the pathology starts)¹⁴³ and that the best prediction is achieved with a combination of baseline tau levels, functional connectivity, and distance between brain regions.¹⁴⁰ Tau spreading is assumed to be an active process along connected brain regions rather than the result of passive diffusion.

4 | TAU IMAGING

During the past decade, the *in vivo* visualization of tau deposition in the human brain has been made possible by the development of a number of selective tau PET tracers, which are currently in different stages of development.¹⁴⁴⁻¹⁴⁸ Although tau PET imaging is beginning to be used in clinical trials, most tracers are still simultaneously undergoing validation. Because tau PET imaging has the potential to facilitate accurate diagnoses of tauopathies, assess disease severity and progression, evaluate the efficacy of potential anti-tau treatments, and improve the selection of clinical trial participants, it has become an area of particularly intensive investigation during the past 5 years.

4.1 | Imaging AD pathology

In AD research, PET imaging of A β plaques has significantly improved our understanding of spatial and temporal evolution of amyloid pathology, and also played an integral role in the discovery that A β is a necessary but not sufficient cause of AD-related cognitive decline.^{149,150} The validation of currently available amyloid PET radiopharmaceuticals, which are highly sensitive and specific for the detection of A β , involved a rigorous process involving *in vitro* studies to ascertain binding affinity, selectivity, and pharmacokinetics. A critical final stage of amyloid PET validation involved a comparison of *in vivo* binding with

post mortem neuropathology. In the field of tau research, a significant milestone was reached very recently when the results of the first such tau imaging study, which compared [¹⁸F]flortaucipir (FTP) PET images to *post mortem* immunohistochemical tau pathology were published in April 2020.¹⁵¹ Shortly after, on May 28, 2020, another major milestone was reached when the Food and Drug Administration approved Tauvid (FTP) as a radioactive diagnostic for PET imaging to estimate the aggregate density and distribution of NFTs—the first tau tracer approved for use in patients who are being evaluated for AD.

Fleisher et al. used FTP (previously referred to as AV1451 and T807) to obtain PET scans of 64 patients diagnosed with AD or non-AD dementia as well as individuals with normal cognition. Among individuals with dementia, only patients over the age of 50 who had a life expectancy of less than 6 months were enrolled, which resulted in a mean time between scan and autopsy of only 2.6 months.¹⁵¹ Visual interpretation of FTP PET scans as consistent with an AD pattern predicted a Braak stage V or VI pathology with a high degree of sensitivity (ranging from 92.3% to 100.0%) and specificity (ranging from 52.0% to 92.0%) and strongly suggested that PET imaging with FTP could be used to determine the density and distribution of AD tau pathology and the presence of AD neuropathologic change necessary to support a neuropathologic diagnosis of AD. This study, whose results agree with those of several similar studies^{152,153} has a number of important implications for clinical research. Most importantly, the study's results suggest that FTP may be a valuable tool for measuring the outcomes of anti-tau therapies for AD, determining whether anti-amyloid therapies can effectively reduce pathologic tau, and measuring disease stage and progression for the selection of clinical trial participants.¹⁵⁴

Although tau PET may be useful for accurately assessing advanced stages of tau pathology, it has not yet been proven sensitive enough to accurately detect early pathology. For example, current tau PET tracers cannot accurately distinguish between Braak stage 0 (absence of tauopathy) and Braak stage 1 (early tauopathy in the entorhinal cortex in the medial temporal lobe).^{152,153,155,156} Until very recently, researchers also have been unable to pinpoint the precise area in the brain where tau accumulation in AD first begins using tau PET imaging. However, Sanchez et al. recently reported findings that suggest that cortical tau pathology may begin in a region of the brain they call the "rhinal cortex"—a region defined anatomically using brain surface anatomy that is sampled during PET imaging.¹⁵⁷ The area comprises the anterior section of the collateral sulcus (rhinal sulcus) and separates the parahippocampal gyrus from the fusiform gyrus. Examining a cross-sectional and longitudinal tau PET of older individuals and healthy controls from the Harvard Aging Brain Study, the researchers found that tangles can begin to accumulate in this region prior to spread to neocortical areas in clinically normal adults. These detailed observations of subsequent spread of pathology, beginning with invasion of the temporal neocortex and precuneus, were used to develop new tau PET staging thresholds.¹⁵⁷

As newer tau tracers for AD continue to undergo development, a key goal will be to continue to refine our understanding of the relationship between amyloid and tau during disease progression, using both amyloid PET and tau PET technology. A recent analysis of data from the

Harvard Aging Brain Study examined correlations among longitudinal changes in amyloid plaques, NFTs, and changes in cognition.¹⁵⁸ Findings from this analysis supported a hypothesized model of disease progression in which significant amyloid load leads to the accumulation of both amyloid plaques and NFTs, with the latter in turn driving cognitive decline. Based on their review,¹⁵⁸ concluded that clinically normal older individuals must reach a critical threshold of baseline amyloidosis prior to the acceleration of neocortical tau accumulation. They also concluded that amyloid and tau likely have a synergistic relationship, and found that in nearly all cases, clinical progression was associated with high levels of both amyloid and tau. One important goal in follow-up research involving larger populations will be to identify factors associated with relative resistance to tau accumulation, particularly among individuals with significant amyloid accumulation.

4.2 | Imaging non-AD tau pathology

The development of tau-specific PET ligands has made it possible to investigate the measurement of tau deposition not only in AD but also in a wide range of non-AD tauopathies, including PSP,^{155,159–162} CBD,^{155,163–166} and Pick's disease.¹⁵⁵ However, FTP and other currently available tau tracers, when used to image non-AD pathology, have generally demonstrated low-affinity binding, significant off-target binding, and other characteristics that have resulted in limited sensitivity and specificity.^{165,167–169} These in vivo results converge with autoradiography studies that have shown absent-to-low binding of FTP to non-AD tauopathies.^{170–172} Furthermore, FTP binding is also found in patients harboring tau-negative FTLT with TDP-43 inclusions (FTLT-TDP), limiting its utility for differentiating FTLT-tau from FTLT-TDP.¹⁵³ The utility of second-generation tau tracers in imaging non-AD has been variable. The radiotracers [¹⁸F]R0948 and [¹⁸F]MK6240 appear to be even more AD-specific than FTP.^{173,174} Conversely, early in vitro and in vivo studies applying the ligands [¹⁸F]PI-2620¹⁷⁵ and [¹⁸F]PM-PBB3 (also known as [¹⁸F]APN-1607)¹⁷⁶ have shown encouraging early results in a variety of non-AD tauopathies.^{174,177–179} A new first-in-class 4R-tau radiotracer, [³H]CBD-2115, was recently disclosed that has an attractive in vitro profile in human brain tissue homogenate binding assays, showing higher affinity (4.9 nM) for progressive supranuclear palsy specific 4R-tau deposits than [³H]flortaucipir (45 nM) or [³H]MK-6240 (> 50 nM). Although this tracer does not show sufficient blood-brain barrier (BBB) penetration for in vivo utility, its selectivity profile makes it an attractive departure point for optimization of brain penetration.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the search continues for a better tracer for non-AD tauopathies, which must demonstrate ample BBB penetration, low toxicity, low nonspecific binding, and rapid uptake and clearance from the brain, without leaving radiolabeled metabolites in the brain.^{150,181}

Although FTP has proven to be less useful for imaging non-AD tauopathies, because it is exceedingly selective for AD, it can be a useful tool for differential diagnosis or accurate discrimination between AD and non-AD tauopathies.¹⁸² As research geared toward the development of non-AD tau tracers continues, a key aim will be to achieve

excellent PET imaging-to-autopsy correlations. A recently published study that illustrates this process was undertaken with the aim of developing an imaging biomarker for CTE. [¹⁸F]flortaucipir was used to assess the correlation between in vivo FTP PET imaging of tau and *post mortem* brain tissue in an individual with CTE. In this patient, a White male former professional American football player with pathologically confirmed CTE, FTP PET findings during life showed only a modest correspondence with *post mortem* pathology and suggested that FTP may have limited utility as a tau biomarker in CTE.¹⁸³

Because tau is a complex molecular imaging target, with heterogeneity in biochemistry and in the microstructure of tau aggregates, it is unlikely that a single tau PET tracer will be useful for capturing patterns of spread associated with different non-AD tauopathies. However, important collaborative efforts are currently under way to optimize the imaging of non-AD tauopathies, in part by taking advantage of the subtle differences in tau folding revealed by cryo-EM technology. The Tau Centers Without Walls, funded by a National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke grant, is bringing together tau imaging experts who are dedicated to developing successful new tracers for non-AD tauopathies. In addition, the Rainwater Charitable Foundation has undertaken a two-pronged approach to the development of non-AD tauopathies tracers. First, it created the PIPETTE Consortium (Philanthropic Investments in Pet Tracers) in 2017 as a cofunding partnership with the Michael J. Fox Foundation to leverage efforts toward creation and optimization of specific α -synuclein and tau ligands. The partners hope to fund promising ligand tracer development at both for-profit and academic institutions that use best-practice structure-based and ligand-based medicinal chemistry optimization using available high-resolution cryo-EM structures of tau and α -synuclein. Second, through the Tau Consortium, it has convened a multidisciplinary team comprising experts in structural biology, computational chemistry, medicinal chemistry, and biophysics to tackle 4R-tau specific ligands. These efforts are expected to improve the efficiency of developing optimal ligands in part by using new computation methods that will likely reduce time to development.

5 | THE IMPORTANCE OF NEW BIOMARKERS FOR TAU

Optimizing the efficiency with which therapies for the treatment of tauopathies are developed will require new tau imaging agents and other novel biomarkers to more accurately assess target engagement, improve the selection of clinical trial participants, and precisely gauge the effects of treatment. Advances in our understanding of tau biology are being incorporated into the development of blood and CSF biomarkers that have the potential to improve measurements of tau, phosphorylated tau, and other markers of neurodegeneration.

Plasma tau phosphorylated at residue 181 (p-tau181) is a useful biomarker for AD and also has proven to be useful in distinguishing individuals with AD from healthy controls and from individuals with other tauopathies.^{184,185} In two recent studies, p-tau181 was measured in 993 plasma samples. Plasma p-tau217 also was proven able

to discriminate between neurodegenerative diseases in 1402 persons from multiple cohorts, with performance close to that of CSF and PET markers.^{186,187}

As anti-tau drug development continues, some novel biomarkers may well be developed in conjunction with treatments. At Tau 2020, Kristin Wildsmith discussed the simultaneous development of a tau PET tracer (¹⁸F]GTP1) and an anti-tau antibody drug (semorinemab; Genentech).¹⁸⁸ [¹⁸F]GTP1 was studied in an AD natural history study to guide use of tau PET in ongoing therapeutic trials (i.e., trials underway by Genentech and Roche). Wildsmith is optimistic that [¹⁸F]GTP1 will show that drugs are slowing the spread of tau. It is hoped that [¹⁸F]GTP1 will provide proof of activity in the brain, by tracking the accumulation of tau pathology, and determine whether baseline tau burden predicts treatment response. In a cross-sectional population, the degree of [¹⁸F]GTP1-specific binding increased with AD severity and could differentiate diagnostic cohorts.

[¹⁸F]GTP1 may be a better staging tool than CSF p-tau181, and there are other novel CSF tau biomarkers, such as tau368¹⁸⁹ and CSF p-tau217 that may also outperform p-tau181.^{186,190} Recent data published in July 2020 suggest that CSF results extend to plasma p-tau217.^{187,191}

6 | APPROACHES TO TAU THERAPEUTICS

Current approaches to disease-modifying treatments for tauopathies involve the targeting of various forms of intracellular and/or extracellular tau to prevent the production, aggregation, spread, or deposition of pathologic tau. Although numerous strategies, including those involving the inhibition of various protein kinases, the inhibition of tau aggregation, the knockdown of the *MAPT* gene using antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs), and active and passive immunotherapies, have shown promise in animal models and other preclinical studies, anti-tau therapeutics have yet to progress beyond the early phases of clinical trials. During the past few years, important overarching goals of anti-tau drug development have included the aim to increase both the number and the efficiency of tau clinical trials, with an emphasis on novel trial design, and to accelerate the development of new biomarkers that can confirm target engagement, ensure appropriate selection and stratification of clinical trial participants, and provide accurate information regarding the reduction of tau burden or spread.¹⁹²

To date, passive immunotherapy has been the dominant strategy for reducing pathologic forms of tau, mirroring the initial focus in anti-amyloid therapies in AD, with multiple compounds in phase 1 and 2 trials. Therapeutic antibodies aim to neutralize or eliminate extracellular tau to slow the progression of tau-mediated neuronal dysfunction and degeneration. Multiple targets are under investigation, ranging from pan-tau antibodies (targeting all six isoforms), to antibodies against specific conformations or unique species of tau. Anti-tau antibodies also differ with regard to their binding site on tau, whether to the N-terminus, the C-terminus, the microtubule binding region, or the proline-rich region.¹⁹³⁻¹⁹⁶ Given the large size of the tau protein, many different epitopes could be targeted. How to identify the “best” epi-

tope to target may become a critical issue, and the answer is not obvious. Different selection criteria can be proposed; for example, it might make sense to prioritize epitopes or conformations that clearly distinguish between pathologic and physiologic forms of tau.⁶⁹ An alternative approach has focused on identifying the antibody most capable of blocking tau spread by unbiased screening of tau antibodies in a quantitative *in vitro* assay attempting to model the uptake and seeding of human pathological tau. In this approach, N-terminally directed antibodies demonstrated surprisingly poor efficacy, whereas a mid-region antibody excelled.¹⁹⁷ These data were further supported by *in vivo* experiments.¹⁹⁸ Clinical trials of this antibody, bepranemab (UCB0107, UCB, Roche/Genentech), in both PSP and AD started early 2018. While clinical development of bepranemab in AD remain in process, plans to continue clinical testing in PSP have been halted.

Because conformational changes in the N-terminal of tau occur early in AD, this region has been the focus of several efforts to develop anti-tau antibodies for AD. The N-terminal fragment also has been a focus in AD because it has been shown to play a role in increasing A β production¹⁹⁹ and also to damage neurons by interfering with mitochondrial function and synaptic plasticity.²⁰⁰ Although antibodies targeting the N-terminal region of tau have exhibited various degrees of efficacy in preclinical trials, there have been clinical trial failures in PSP. There are ongoing clinical trial efforts in AD.

In July 2019, after a preplanned interim futility analysis, AbbVie halted a phase 2 trial of ABBV-8E12, an anti-tau antibody that targets the N-terminal. A humanized IgG4 antibody, ABBV-8E12 recognizes an aggregated, extracellular form of pathologic tau that has been implicated in transneuronal propagation of tau pathology in cell-based and mouse models, and also is believed to account for the stereotypical progression of tau pathology in AD.^{101,201} However, the antibody is still undergoing testing in a phase 2 trial of individuals with MCI and early dementia due to AD.

Later in 2019, a phase 2 study of another antibody that targets the N-terminus, gosuranemab (BIIB092; Biogen)²⁰² for PSP was discontinued. The primary endpoint, as measured by the PSP rating scale at week 52, proved not to be statistically significant, and the study did not demonstrate efficacy with regard to key clinical secondary endpoints. However, although Biogen discontinued development of gosuranemab for PSP and other primary tauopathies, a phase 2 study of gosuranemab for the treatment of MCI in individuals with AD or mild AD is ongoing.

The pan-tau monoclonal antibody semorinemab is currently in phase 2 trials in prodromal and mild AD (TAURIEL GN39763)²⁰³ and in moderate AD (LAURIET GN40040)²⁰⁴ after positive safety data from the phase 1 study. Although final results are expected in the third quarter of 2021, Roche and AC Immune have announced that TAURIEL did not meet its primary or secondary endpoints demonstrating no benefit over placebo.

The limited success to date in clinical trials testing passive immunotherapy directed at tau and amyloid targets offers some insight into several ways in which future anti-tau antibody trials might evolve. Determining sufficient dose and target engagement with pharmacodynamic and biologic effects of a tau-based therapy is likely to be critical. The development of passive immunotherapy for the amyloidopathy of

AD has underscored the need to have sufficient dosing. Several monoclonal antibodies, including aducanumab and gantenerumab, failed to show therapeutic effects until the need for sustained and larger doses was appreciated. The need to better identify the target pathology in those selected for inclusion in trials was underscored in the bapineuzumab phase 3 program, in which an N-terminus directed beta amyloid monoclonal antibody was tested in trials with more than 2000 subjects and in which 21.4% of participants were Pittsburgh compound B PET negative for the target amyloidopathy prior to enrollment.²⁰⁵ It is also important to recognize the value of being able to diagnose patients at an earlier stage of disease. The availability of neuroimaging of markers of amyloidopathy and tauopathy; CSF biomarkers; and, more recently, blood-based biomarkers of amyloid and tau offers critical new opportunities for meeting this goal. Another important aim will be to eliminate factors that might potentially confound trial findings, such as patients or clinical trial participants taking large numbers of medications simultaneously. A third important goal will be to improve outcome measures so they are tailored to different clinical phenotypes.

The heterogeneity among different tauopathies with regard to their biochemical composition, their capacities for seeding and propagation, their different morphologies (tau inclusions), and their tendency to reside in specific compartments of neuronal and glial cells strongly suggests that a single anti-tau immunotherapy is unlikely to be effective in the treatment of multiple tauopathies.^{22,206}

Active tau vaccines, like passive anti-tau antibodies, target various regions of tau, including the C-terminus, the microtubule-binding domain, and the mid-region. In preclinical studies, many anti-tau vaccines developed to date have demonstrated the ability to reduce tau pathology,²⁰⁷ and in animals, some of these have resulted in improved cognition or motor abilities. Only two active anti-tau vaccines have begun to be tested in clinical trials: the ACI-35 vaccine for AD (AC Immune SA, Janssen) and the AADvac1 vaccine for AD and nonfluent primary progressive aphasia (Axon Neuroscience SE). In April 2020, AADvac1 was reported in a phase 2 trial to slow neurodegeneration as measured by significant reduction in levels of plasma neurofilament light chain as well as levels of CSF tau and phosphorylated tau. Although initially ACI-35 demonstrated only a weak immune response during early clinical testing, recent data from a phase 1/2 study demonstrated very high levels of anti-tau antibody titers, levels unprecedented in the tau field, bringing hope that this enhanced immunogenicity approach will show therapeutic effects.

ASOs, whose safety and efficacy have been demonstrated in clinical trials in other therapeutic areas, are short, single-stranded, synthetic DNA-like molecules designed to target and degrade mRNA through the nuclear enzyme RNase H1, thereby reducing production of the subsequent protein.²⁰⁸ Unlike immunotherapy, tau ASOs can target both intracellular and extracellular tau. However, due to their highly negative charge and inability to cross the BBB, ASOs must be administered intrathecally. Importantly, ASOs are highly selective, dose titratable, and reversible. The first ASO to directly target *MAPT* gene expression (ISIS814907/BIB080), and in turn tau protein levels, was developed by Ionis Pharmaceuticals in collaboration with Timothy Miller at Washington University in St. Louis. In adult wild-type and human tau-transgenic

mouse models, ASOs that targeted tau mRNA, resulting in decreased tau protein levels, have been shown to reduce toxin-induced seizures, neuronal loss, and neurofibrillary pathology. Importantly, human tau ASOs in tau-transgenic mice not only prevented additional tau pathology from forming, but reversed pre-existing neurofibrillary tangles and "seed-competent" tau species. Tau ASOs also have normalized behavioral phenotypes and lengthened survival in mice.²⁰⁹ Infusion of tau ASO into the CSF of cynomolgus monkeys by an intrathecal bolus was shown to reduce tau mRNA across different brain regions, and CSF tau protein levels after ASO exposure directly correlated to hippocampal tau levels.²⁰⁸ In partnership with Biogen, Ionis Pharmaceuticals is testing the MAPT-Rx ASO in a phase 1 clinical trial in mild AD. Enrollment for this study was completed in January 2020, and the MAPT-Rx ASO has been well tolerated thus far. Biogen recently licensed BIB080 and will run all future clinical trials in AD and primary tauopathies.

It is critical that we learn lessons from the negative results in anti-amyloid trials of recent years. We must determine when (at what stage) to treat and how to diagnose early, using biomarkers to identify individuals at an earlier stage of disease. It will be essential to develop markers of patient variability in progression and to determine how much tau should be reduced to ensure safety and efficacy. It also will be important to validate outcome measures to enable robust measurement of biologic and cognitive change.

6.1 | Addressing challenges associated with current approaches to drug development

At Tau 2020, several presentations offered a glimpse of unique strategies currently being pursued in industry to address challenges associated with developing anti-tau therapies. Moving forward, innovative clinical trial designs will be needed to improve the efficiency with which high-quality evidence is obtained during the testing of new interventions. In the field of oncology, for example, master protocols designed with the goal of answering more clinical questions more efficiently and in less time have been successfully implemented.²¹⁰ One such master protocol, a basket study, was recently used for the first time in tau research to assess the safety, tolerability, and pharmacodynamics of the microtubule stabilizer TPI-287 in AD, PSP, and corticobasal syndrome (CBS).²¹¹ The goal of a basket study is to examine a single targeted therapy in the context of multiple diseases or disease subtypes, defined by specific underlying molecular causes.^{210,211} Although the clinical trial examining TPI-287 did not support further development of the intervention, it did demonstrate the potential value of conducting basket clinical trials to compare the effects of tau-directed therapies in AD, which is a secondary tauopathy, as well as in the primary tauopathies PSP and A β PET-negative CBS.²¹¹

One significant obstacle to treating neurodegenerative disorders has been the difficulty in crossing the BBB, which regulates the transfer of proteins, nutrients, and waste products to protect the brain from toxins, but can also restrict the entry of some drugs. Using the transferrin receptor (TfR), expressed by brain capillary endothelial cells, Denali Therapeutics has developed a large molecule platform—known

as the transport vehicle (TV)—that is capable of transporting a range of molecules over the BBB by binding the apical domain of TfR engineered into the Fc domain of an IgG and subsequently transcytosing through endothelial cells and into the interstitial space of the central nervous system (CNS).²¹² Denali has demonstrated both utility and modularity of their TV platform to significantly increase brain levels of numerous types of cargo attached to this TV system, including enzymes,²¹³ proteins, antibody Fab arms (ATV; eg, ATV:Tau), and oligonucleotides (OTV). With this modularity built into the TV platform, Denali is exploring whether tau can be directly targeted using an ATV:Tau molecule that increases tau antibody levels in the brain and/or an OTV:Tau that delivers a tau-targeted oligonucleotide to the CNS via a systemic injection.

Arvinas is creating a new class of drugs that are capable of degrading pathogenic proteins, including tau. The company designs proteolysis-targeting chimera (PROTAC) degrader molecules, which are heterobifunctional, modular small molecules engineered to induce the degradation of disease-causing proteins by harnessing the ubiquitin-proteasome system.²¹⁴ PROTAC small molecules can target the source of pathologic intracellular tau; degrade it; and, in turn, impact the source of extracellular pathologic tau. They also can discriminate between wild-type and pathologic forms of tau. Arvinas's investigational therapeutic has the potential to ensure BBB penetration with oral administration. This approach has advantages over antibodies, which only block extracellular tau, and over current ASOs in the clinic, which so far do not appear capable of discriminating between normal and pathologic tau.

7 | LOOKING AHEAD

At Tau 2020, the tau research community demonstrated an enthusiastic commitment to advancing the development of anti-tau therapeutics, necessary new imaging agents and biomarkers, and the critical tools that will be needed to facilitate anti-tau drug development. The meeting was marked by a strong collaborative spirit and dedication to deepening our understanding of all aspects of tau biology and its relationship to a wide range of heterogeneous tauopathies.

Representatives of various public, private, and academic entities conveyed their blueprints for moving forward. The National Institute on Aging (NIA), for example, has expressed a commitment to pursuing a diversified pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic portfolio of dementia treatments, with a significant portion of their budget devoted to research and related development of treatments for tauopathies and other dementias.

During the past year, the NIA awarded a \$73-million grant over 5 years toward the establishment of the Target Enablement to Accelerate Therapy Development for Alzheimer's Disease (TREAT-AD) Drug Discovery Center, which will be devoted to researching the tau protein and other targets. The Discovery Center will be led by Allan Levey of Emory University, Atlanta; Lara Mangravite of Sage Bionetworks; and Aled Edwards, of the Structural Genomics Consortium. These research teams and others will leverage the data and results from the Accelerat-

ing Medicines Partnership–Alzheimer's Disease program and develop a series of new therapeutic hypotheses centered on tau, among other prioritized novel targets. TREAT-AD will develop target-enabling tools, including high-quality antibodies and chemical probes, and will openly disseminate all data, methods, and reagents to all interested academic and/or commercial investigators to accelerate validation of novel drug targets and to seed new drug-discovery efforts.

Moving forward, an important focus will be supporting tau-focused drug discovery efforts as well as early-career researchers. Toward this aim, the Rainwater Charitable Foundation and the Alzheimer's Association have partnered to fund emerging drug discovery programs as part of their Tau Pipeline Enabling Program. These 2-year awards go to drug-discovery teams at private and academic organizations in the United States and European Union. A total of \$7 million has been granted in the 2 years of this partnership to 13 therapeutic programs.²¹⁵ Additionally, the Tau Consortium funds a large portfolio of therapeutic programs focusing on diverse tau targeting mechanisms and modalities (small molecules, antibodies, intrabodies, PROTACS, and ASOs) and provides integrated drug discovery expertise and resources through partnerships with drug discovery institutes and contract research organizations.²¹⁶ Importantly, academic drug discovery teams are guided by drug discovery and intellectual property consultants to ensure development of robust data with forward movement into clinical development.

The NIA is also funding many new and early-career awards, including those for non-AD investigators interested in AD research, while the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has established a new multidisciplinary Centers Without Walls for research on tau, with a primary focus on data sharing and open science.

A second global tau conference is planned for 2022. As with Tau 2020, the goal of the upcoming Tau 2022 conference will be to provide a forum for academic, industry, philanthropic, and government stakeholders to share new developments in tau research while encouraging enhanced collaboration and alignment regarding remaining challenges in the field. It is hoped that Tau 2022 will continue to attract new talent and funding to the field, while fostering greater awareness of the need for this important research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Peter Davies, co-chair of Tau 2020 and chair of the Rainwater Prize Selection Committee. We thank Michel Goedert, Kenneth S. Kosik, and Eliezer Masliah for their contributions to Tau 2020 and the manuscript and acknowledge all the presenters at the conference.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

CES is a full-time employee of the Alzheimer's Association and, in the past 36 months, reports consultation fees from Jazz Pharmaceuticals and support for attending meetings and/or travel to the AAIC Satellite Symposium Sydney (2019) and Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior (SSIB) Annual Meeting (2019). CES reports an unpaid role as a trustee of Dementia Adventure (2018–2020). HS is a full-time employee of the Alzheimer's Association and, in the past 36 months,

reports grants or contracts received from the National Institutes on Aging at NIH and unpaid roles as Chair, Health Research Alliance Programmatic Chair, CDMRP, Alzheimer's. DB is an employee of Asceneuron SA and, in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF; USD 2.2 M in 02/2021 paid to Asceneuron SA) and reimbursements for his travel and meeting expenses as an employee by Asceneuron SA. He is holder of stock, stock options, and founder warrants of Asceneuron SA as founder, employee, and board director. AB in the past 36 months: reports grants or contracts received from NIH, Bluefield Project, Rainwater Charitable Foundation, Biogen, Eisai, Regeneron, Woolsey paid to institution; consulting, lectures, presentations, speakers bureaus, manuscript writing, or educational events fees from Arvinas, Arkuda, AZTherapies, GSK, ACTG, Lundbeck, Oligomerix, Ono, Regeneron, Roche, Samumed, Stealth, Third Rock, Transposon, Wave, UCB, Peerview, UCLA all paid to AB; he serves on Scientific Advisory Board: Alector, Arvinas, Arkuda, AZTherapies; holds stock options: Alector, Arvinas, Arkuda, AZTherapies; has unfunded biomarker collaborations with Eli Lilly, Novartis, Biogen, LMI all to institution. PB is an unpaid board member of Stroke Onward, a non-profit organization, and is a very minor shareholder of Posit Science. JPB, in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from Belgian National Fund for Research (FNRS) paid to Universite Libre de Bruxelles, and received support for attending meetings and/or travel to Tau2020 Global Conference February 12–13, 2020, Washington, D.C. LB, in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from French National Research Agency Fondation Recherche Medicale LabEx DISTALZ made to his institution; support for attending meetings and/or travel for the ADPD meeting Tau 2020-Rainwater Charitable Foundation; patents: WO2020193520 method of treatment of tauopathy disorders by targeting new tau species, WO2020120644 New anti-tau single domain antibody, WO2018178078 New tau species. AC is a full-time employee of Arvinas and, in the past 36 months, had patents planned, issued, or pending for WO2016126995A1 - Tau anti-sense oligomers and uses thereof; is a FSHD Society TACT member; and held stock or stock options in Arvinas. In the past 36 months, GC has received research support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement number 667696), Inserm, Fondation d'entreprise MMA des Entrepreneurs du Futur, Fondation Alzheimer, Programme Hospitalier de Recherche Clinique, Region Normandie, Association France Alzheimer et maladies apparentees, Fondation Vaincre Alzheimer and Fondation Recherche Alzheimer (all to Inserm); reports personal fees from Fondation d'entreprise MMA des Entrepreneurs du Futur; and reports consultation fees from Fondation d'entreprise MMA des Entrepreneurs du Futur. M Citron is a full-time employee of UCB and, in the past 36 months, reports conference travel funded by UCB and employee stock/stock options in UCB, a biopharmaceutical company engaged in Tau drug development. SDV is a full-time employee and shareholder in Denali Therapeutics Inc. and reports, in the past 36 months, patents planned, issued, or pending for methods for modulating tau expression for reducing seizure and modifying a neurodegenerative syndrome. US20200032257A1, tau modulators and methods and compositions

for delivery thereof. US20180153921A1 and methods for treating and monitoring progranulin-associated disorders WO2020081575A1. HF has received in last 36 months grant funding to UCSD from Biohaven Pharmaceuticals, Annovis (QR Pharma), AC Immune, Vivoryon (Probiobdrug), and LuMind Foundation; reports fees for service agreements through UCSD for consulting with Novo Nordisk, Merck Pharmaceuticals, Samus Therapeutics, Arkuda Therapeutics, Samumed, and Axon Neurosciences (no personal funds received, all funds to UCSD); reports personal payment received for patent: Feldman HH (filed November 26, 2008). Detecting and Treating Dementia Serial Number 12/3-2691 U.S. Patent No. PCT/US2007/07008. Washington, DC: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; travel expenses to UCSD from World Events Forum (ADDF), Samus, Samumed, Axon, Tau Consortium, and Novo Nordisk (no personal funds received, all funds to UCSD); participation on a Data Safety Monitoring Board or Advisory Board for Roche/Genentech Pharmaceuticals (DMC and DSMB) Janssen Research & Development LLC (DMC and DSMB) Tau Consortium (Scientific Advisory Board; no personal funds received, all funds to UCSD). BF in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts all paid to institution: Federal Period: R01 AG057896 NIA/NINDS, R01 AG062475-01A1 NIA/NINDS, RF1 NS112391-01 NIA/NINDS, R01 AG058778-01 NIH/NINDS, K99/R00 NS 088429 NIH/NINDS, UTH-SCSA Pepper Center, Center for Biomedical Neurosciences Pilot Grant, Rainwater Foundation/Tau Consortium, William and Ella Owens Medical Research Foundation MD Anderson Neurodegeneration Consortium, Transposon Therapeutics; consulting paid to institution: 2019: \$50,000.00 2021: \$50,000.00; paid honoraria, paid to individual: 2020: University of Texas Austin, Department of Neuroscience Seminar Series, invited speaker 2019: University of Texas Southwestern, Symposium on Neurodegenerative Diseases, invited speaker; paid travel over the past 36 months, paid to individual: 2020: Tau2020 and Tau Consortium Investigator's Meeting, Washington, DC; paid travel from Rainwater Foundation, invited speaker. 2019: Gerontological Society of America, Austin, TX; paid travel from GSA, invited speaker. 2019: Alzheimer's Association International Conference, Los Angeles, CA; paid travel from Alzheimer's Association, invited speaker. 2019: Tau Consortium Meeting, Dallas, TX; paid travel from Rainwater Foundation. 2018: American Federation for Aging Research New Investigator in Alzheimer's Disease Meeting, Santa Barbara, CA; paid travel from AFAR, invited speaker. 2018: PSP & CBD International Research Symposium, London, United Kingdom; paid travel from CurePSP, keynote speaker. 2018: Keystone Meeting, Advances in Neurodegenerative Disease Research, Keystone, CO (Invited Speaker); paid travel from Keystone, invited speaker; serves on Scientific Advisory Board for CurePSP- 2021. AG reports support for the present manuscript from Rainwater Charitable Foundation—grant to Mount Sinai; in past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from Rainwater Charitable Foundation, JPB Foundation, NIH, Neurodegeneration Consortium all paid to Institution, and has received royalties or licenses for Taconic Industries, Athena Diagnostics both personal, and received consulting fees for Queensland Brain Institute, VIB, Belgium, UK Dementia Research Institute all paid to AG, and received payment or honoraria for lectures, presentations, speakers bureaus, manuscript writing, or

educational events from Mayo Clinic, University of Kentucky all paid to AG. MG holds stock in and is an employee of AbbVie. Bradley Hyman in last 36 months reports that Hyman's laboratory is supported by sponsored research agreements with Abbvie, F Prime, and research grants from the National Institutes of Health, Cure Alzheimer's Fund, Tau Consortium, and the JPB Foundation; serves on the SAB of Dewpoint and owns stock; serves on a scientific advisory board or is a consultant for Avrobio, AZtherapies, Biogen, Cell Signaling, PPF, Novartis, the US Dept of Justice, Takeda, Vigil, W20 group, and Seer; reports payment for expert testimony from US Dept of Justice; reports reimbursement for travel costs to attend meetings at AD/PD; Japanese neuropathology assn, FBIR meeting; serves on a DSMB for Biogen; reports he has a family member who works at Novartis, and owns stock in Novartis; serves on an advisory board and owns stock in Dewpoint. KJ in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from NIH paid to institution, personal consulting fees from Novartis, and participation on a Data Safety Monitoring Board or Advisory Board for Cerveau Ad Bd with no payment. CK in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from NIH, Thome Foundation, Rainwater Charitable Foundation, Bright Focus, payment made to institution. DK reports receiving payment for study activities performed, but no financial interest in the entities that have contracted with DK's institution for clinical trials; in last 36 months, reports consulting fees for Advisory Boards with Roche and Biogen, honoraria from Roche for Symposium organization, and presentation at ADPD2021; reports being retained in a case for expert testimony in Texas; reports being the Safety Monitor and serving on the DSMB for the rrAD study and on the National Board of Directors of the Alzheimer's Association, completed in April 2020. IL is supported by National Institutes of Health grants (2R01AG038791-06A, U01NS090259, U01NS100610, U01NS80818, R25NS098999, P20GM109025, U19AG063911-1, 1R21NS114764-01A1), Michael J. Fox Foundation, Parkinson Foundation, Lewy Body Association, Roche, Abbvie, Biogen, Centogene, EIP-Pharma, and Biohaven Pharmaceuticals; was a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of Lundbeck Advisory Board and Scientific advisor for Amydis; receives her salary from the University of California San Diego and as Chief Editor of *Frontiers in Neurology*. HM, in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from Parkinson's UK, Cure Parkinson's Trust, PSP Association, CBD Solutions, MND Association, Drake Foundation, Medical Research Council, Michael J. Fox Foundation, all to institution, and personal consulting fees: 2018 - Biogen, UCB, Biohaven, Abbvie, Denali 2019 - Biogen, Biohaven, Lundbeck 2021 - Roche, and personal lecture fees: 2018 - Biogen, UCB, Wellcome trust, C4X Discovery, GE-Healthcare 2019 - Wellcome Trust, Movement Disorders Society. HW is a co-applicant on a patent application related to C9ORF72 - Method for diagnosing a neurodegenerative disease (PCT/GB2012/052140) and reports personal fees for Advisory Board - Biogen. CM, in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts received from 2020 ARUK funding CODEC II study 150,000 - coPI - institution 2019 LCRN funding for research team - 152,000 institution 2019 750,000 funding CRASH4 trial - coPI institution, and consulting fees from BIOGEN for work on advisory board, WashU therapeutics evaluation committee all paid to her; reports support for attending meetings and/or travel for

IONIS reimbursement of CTAD registration fees for conference 2020; participated as chair of data safety monitoring board for trial in AD for Imperial College, unpaid; and chair of services committee and executive member Association of British Neurologists, unpaid. JM, in last 36 months, reports patents WO2018102397A1 unrelated to this publication. MP reports research supported by grants from The Peggy Furth Fund at Mayo Clinic, Glycomine, Idorsia, Orphazyme, Shire-Takeda; stock owned in IntraBio; and consulting for Azafaros, IntraBio, Orphazyme, and Recursion; receives a stipend from Sage Publications as Editor-In-Chief of the *Journal of Child Neurology* and *Child Neurology Open*, and from the SSIEM for his role as an editor of the *Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease* and *JIMD Reports*; receives royalties from Wolters-Kluwer as section editor for pediatric neurology for *Up To Date*. YQ, in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts from National institute on Aging, Alzheimer's Association, Massachusetts General Hospital, and honoraria for lectures, presentations, speakers bureaus, manuscript writing, or educational events from INS and AAIC paid to YQ; serves on the Executive Committee of the ISTAART Diversity and Disparities Professional Interest Area-PIA, unpaid. GR, in the past 36 months, reports grants or contracts from NIH, Alzheimer's Association, American College of Radiology, Avid Radiopharmaceuticals, GE Healthcare, Life Molecular Imaging, Genentech paid to institution, and personal consulting fees from Eisai, Genentech, Roche, Axon Neurosciences; a personal lecture fee from Miller Medical; and DSMB fees from Johnson & Johnson; and is an Associate Editor for *JAMA Neurology*. AR in past 36 months reports 500 shares of AC Immune in a personal retirement account. MS is a full-time employee of Biogen, and has received support to attend several meetings and travel; serves as Senior Medical Director in the Neurodegeneration Development Unit; and serves as lead for an anti-tau clinical asset. LTS has patents in prosecutions from previous employer the CHDI Foundation where LTS worked on a different role to their current role—these patents are owned by the CHDI Foundation, a non-for-profit organization developing therapeutics for patients suffering from Huntington's Disease (<https://patents.justia.com/inventor/leticia-m-toledo-sherman>); is an employee of the Rainwater Charitable Foundation, a non-profit research organization. SW, in the past 36 months, reports consulting fees from Pfizer, and reports leadership or fiduciary roles in board, society, committee, or advocacy groups for Atalanta, Eikonizo, RBNC, Sironax, Aratome, Denali, TargetALS, Mending Minds with no payment received, part of the job; reports stock or stock options from Denali. KW, in the past 36 months, reports patents: Nov 2020, patent US 10,836,817 B2 co-inventor Anti-tau antibodies and methods of use; is a full-time employee, receives a salary from, and holds and receives stock options from Genentech a member of the Roche group; in the past 36 months, reports payments by the Alzheimer's Association for medical writing. M Carrillo is a full-time employee of the Alzheimer's Association and reports, in the past 36 months, participating on a Data Safety Monitoring Board or Advisory Board for US POINTER and holding a role for EASTERSEALS.

ORCID

Claire Sexton  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3846-2986>

REFERENCES

- Stelzmann RA, Schnitzlein HN, Murtagh FR. An english translation of Alzheimer's 1907 paper, "über eine eigenartige erkankung der hirnrinde. *Clin Anat*. 1995;8(6):429-431.
- Kidd M. Paired helical filaments in electron microscopy of Alzheimer's disease. *Nature*. 1963;197(4863):192-193.
- Terry RD. The fine structure of neurofibrillary tangles in Alzheimer's disease*†‡. *J Neuropathol Exp Neurol*. 1963;22(4):629-642.
- Weingarten MD, Lockwood AH, Hwo SY, Kirschner MW. A protein factor essential for microtubule assembly. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 1975;72(5):1858-1862.
- Goedert M, Wischik CM, Crowther RA, Walker JE, Klug A. Cloning and sequencing of the cDNA encoding a core protein of the paired helical filament of Alzheimer disease: identification as the microtubule-associated protein tau. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 1988;85(11):4051-4055.
- Wischik CM, Novak M, Thøgersen HC, et al. Isolation of a fragment of tau derived from the core of the paired helical filament of Alzheimer disease. *Proc Natl Acad Sci*. 1988;85(12):4506-4510.
- Wischik CM, Novak M, Edwards PC, Klug A, Tichelaar W, Crowther RA. Structural characterization of the core of the paired helical filament of Alzheimer disease. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 1988;85(13):4884-4888.
- Brion J-P, Passareiro H, Nunez J, Flament-Durand J. Immunological detection of tau protein in neurofibrillary tangles of Alzheimer's disease[mise en evidence immunologique de la proteine tau au niveau des lesions de degenerescence neurofibrillaire de la maladie d'Alzheimer. *Arch Biol (Liege)*. 1985;96:229-235.
- Arendt T, Stieler JT, Holzer M. Tau and tauopathies. *Brain Res Bull*. 2016;126(Pt 3):238-292.
- Sotiropoulos I, Galas M-C, Silva JM, et al. Atypical, non-standard functions of the microtubule associated Tau protein. *Acta Neuropathol Commun*. 2017;5:91.
- Barbier P, Zejneli O, Martinho M, et al. Role of tau as a microtubule-associated protein: structural and functional aspects. *Front Aging Neurosci*. 2019;11:204.
- Ferrer I, López-González I, Carmona M, et al. Glial and neuronal tau pathology in tauopathies: characterization of disease-specific phenotypes and tau pathology progression. *J Neuropathol Exp Neurol*. 2014;73(1):81-97.
- Spillantini MG, Goedert M. Tau pathology and neurodegeneration. *Lancet Neurol*. 2013;12(6):609-622.
- Wang Y, Mandelkow E. Tau in physiology and pathology. *Nat Rev Neurosci*. 2016;17(1):5-21.
- Binder LI, Frankfurter A, Rebhun LI. The distribution of tau in the mammalian central nervous system. *J Cell Biol*. 1985;101(4):1371-1378.
- Kadavath H, Hofele RV, Biernat J, et al. Tau stabilizes microtubules by binding at the interface between tubulin heterodimers. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2015;112(24):7501-7506.
- Kellogg EH, Hejab NMA, Poepsel S, Downing KH, DiMaio F, Nogales E. Near-atomic model of microtubule-tau interactions. *Science*. 2018;360(6394):1242-1246.
- Goedert M, Spillantini MG, Jakes R, Rutherford D, Crowther RA. Multiple isoforms of human microtubule-associated protein tau: sequences and localization in neurofibrillary tangles of Alzheimer's disease. *Neuron*. 1989;3(4):519-526.
- Brandt R, Léger J, Lee G. Interaction of tau with the neural plasma membrane mediated by tau's amino-terminal projection domain. *J Cell Biol*. 1995;131(5):1327-1340.
- Goedert M, Jakes R. Expression of separate isoforms of human tau protein: correlation with the tau pattern in brain and effects on tubulin polymerization. *EMBO J*. 1990;9(13):4225-4230.
- Goedert M, Falcon B, Zhang W, Ghetti B, Scheres SHW. Distinct conformers of assembled tau in Alzheimer's and Pick's diseases. *Cold Spring Harb Symp Quant Biol*. 2018;83:163-171.
- Colin M, Dujardin S, Schraen-Maschke S, et al. From the prion-like propagation hypothesis to therapeutic strategies of anti-tau immunotherapy. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl)*. 2020;139(1):3-25.
- Kondo J, Honda T, Mori H, et al. The carboxyl third of tau is tightly bound to paired helical filaments. *Neuron*. 1988;1(9):827-834.
- Arakhamia T, Lee CE, Carlomagno Y, et al. Posttranslational modifications mediate the structural diversity of tauopathy strains. *Cell*. 2020;180(4):633-644.e12.
- Falcon B, Zivanov J, Zhang W, et al. Novel tau filament fold in chronic traumatic encephalopathy encloses hydrophobic molecules. *Nature*. 2019;568(7752):420-423.
- Fitzpatrick AWP, Falcon B, He S, et al. Cryo-EM structures of tau filaments from Alzheimer's disease. *Nature*. 2017;547(7662):185-190.
- Scheres SH, Zhang W, Falcon B, Goedert M. Cryo-EM structures of tau filaments. *Curr Opin Struct Biol*. 2020;64:17-25.
- Zhang W, Tarutani A, Newell KL, et al. Novel tau filament fold in corticobasal degeneration. *Nature*. 2020;580(7802):283-287.
- Schweighauser M, Shi Y, Tarutani A, et al. Structures of α -synuclein filaments from multiple system atrophy. *Nature*. 2020;585(7825):464-469.
- Zhang W, Falcon B, Murzin AG, et al. Heparin-induced tau filaments are polymorphic and differ from those in Alzheimer's and Pick's diseases. *eLife*. 2019;8:e43584..
- Mudher A, Colin M, Dujardin S, et al. What is the evidence that tau pathology spreads through prion-like propagation?. *Acta Neuropathol Commun*. 2017;5(1):99.
- Kovacs GG. Invited review: neuropathology of tauopathies: principles and practice. *Neuropathol Appl Neurobiol*. 2015;41(1):3-23.
- Uchihara T. Silver diagnosis in neuropathology: principles, practice and revised interpretation. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl)*. 2007;113(5):483-499.
- Jadhav S, Avila J, Schöll M, et al. A walk through tau therapeutic strategies. *Acta Neuropathol Commun*. 2019;7(1):22.
- Lindwall G, Cole RD. Phosphorylation affects the ability of tau protein to promote microtubule assembly. *J Biol Chem*. 1984;259(8):5301-5305.
- Buée-Scherrer V, Condamines O, Mourton-Gilles C, et al. AD2, a phosphorylation-dependent monoclonal antibody directed against tau proteins found in Alzheimer's disease. *Brain Res Mol Brain Res*. 1996;39(1-2):79-88.
- d'Abramo C, Acker CM, Jimenez H, Davies P. Passive immunization in JNPL3 transgenic mice using an array of phospho-Tau specific antibodies. *PLoS One*. 2015;10(8):e0135774.
- Jicha GA, Bowser R, Kazam IG, Davies P. Alz-50 and MC-1, a new monoclonal antibody raised to paired helical filaments, recognize conformational epitopes on recombinant tau. *J Neurosci Res*. 1997;48(2):128-132.
- Mawal-Dewan M, Schmidt ML, Balin B, Perl DP, Lee VM, Trojanowski JQ. Identification of phosphorylation sites in PHF-TAU from patients with Guam amyotrophic lateral sclerosis/parkinsonism-dementia complex. *J Neuropathol Exp Neurol*. 1996;55(10):1051-1059.
- Mercken M, Vandermeeren M, Lübke U, et al. Affinity purification of human tau proteins and the construction of a sensitive sandwich enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay for human tau detection. *J Neurochem*. 1992;58(2):548-553.
- Wolozin BL, Pruchnicki A, Dickson DW, Davies P. A neuronal antigen in the brains of Alzheimer patients. *Science*. 1986;232(4750):648-650.
- Castellani RJ, Perry G. Tau biology, tauopathy, traumatic brain injury, and diagnostic challenges. *J Alzheimers Dis JAD*. 2019;67(2):447-467.

43. Pluta R, Ułamek-Kozioł M, Januszewski S, Czuczwar SJ. Tau protein dysfunction after brain ischemia. *J Alzheimers Dis JAD*. 2018;66(2):429-437.
44. Faraco G, Hochrainer K, Segarra SG, et al. Dietary salt promotes cognitive impairment through tau phosphorylation. *Nature*. 2019;574(7780):686-690.
45. Min S-W, Cho S-H, Zhou Y, et al. Acetylation of tau inhibits its degradation and contributes to tauopathy. *Neuron*. 2010;67(6):953-966.
46. Orr ME, Sullivan AC, Frost B. A brief overview of tauopathy: causes, consequences, and therapeutic strategies. *Trends Pharmacol Sci*. 2017;38(7):637-648.
47. Bukar Maina M, Al-Hilaly YK, Serpell LC. Nuclear tau and its potential role in Alzheimer's disease. *Biomolecules*. 2016;6(1):9.
48. Sjöberg MK, Shestakova E, Mansuroglu Z, Maccioni RB, Bonnefoy E. Tau protein binds to pericentromeric DNA: a putative role for nuclear tau in nucleolar organization. *J Cell Sci*. 2006;119(Pt 10):2025-2034.
49. Maina MB, Bailey LJ, Wagih S, et al. The involvement of tau in nucleolar transcription and the stress response. *Acta Neuropathol Commun*. 2018;6(1):70.
50. Mansuroglu Z, Benhelli-Mokrani H, Marcato V, et al. Loss of Tau protein affects the structure, transcription and repair of neuronal pericentromeric heterochromatin. *Sci Rep*. 2016;6:33047.
51. Frost B, Bardai FH, Feany MB. Lamin dysfunction mediates neurodegeneration in tauopathies. *Curr Biol CB*. 2016;26(1):129-136.
52. Paonessa F, Evans LD, Solanki R, et al. Microtubules deform the nuclear membrane and disrupt nucleocytoplasmic transport in tau-mediated frontotemporal dementia. *Cell Rep*. 2019;26(3):582-593.e5.
53. Eftekharzadeh B, Daigle JG, Kapinos LE, et al. Tau protein disrupts nucleocytoplasmic transport in Alzheimer's disease. *Neuron*. 2019;101(2):349.
54. Frost B, Hemberg M, Lewis J, Feany MB. Tau promotes neurodegeneration through global chromatin relaxation. *Nat Neurosci*. 2014;17(3):357-366.
55. Khurana V, Merlo P, DuBoff B, et al. A neuroprotective role for the DNA damage checkpoint in tauopathy. *Aging Cell*. 2012;11(2):360-362.
56. Violet M, Delattre L, Tardivel M, et al. A major role for Tau in neuronal DNA and RNA protection in vivo under physiological and hyperthermic conditions. *Front Cell Neurosci*. 2014;8:84.
57. Cornelison GL, Levy SA, Jenson T, Frost B. Tau-induced nuclear envelope invagination causes a toxic accumulation of mRNA in *Drosophila*. *Aging Cell*. 2019;18(1):e12847.
58. Hsieh Y-C, Guo C, Yalamanchili HK, et al. Tau-mediated disruption of the spliceosome triggers cryptic RNA splicing and neurodegeneration in Alzheimer's disease. *Cell Rep*. 2019;29(2):301-316.e10.
59. Bou Samra E, Buhagiar-Labarchède G, Machon C, et al. A role for Tau protein in maintaining ribosomal DNA stability and cytidine deaminase-deficient cell survival. *Nat Commun*. 2017;8(1):693.
60. Meier S, Bell M, Lyons DN, et al. Pathological tau promotes neuronal damage by impairing ribosomal function and decreasing protein synthesis. *J Neurosci*. 2016;36(3):1001-1007.
61. Guo C, Jeong H-H, Hsieh Y-C, et al. Tau activates transposable elements in Alzheimer's disease. *Cell Rep*. 2018;23(10):2874-2880.
62. Sun W, Samimi H, Gamez M, Zare H, Frost B. Pathogenic tau-induced piRNA depletion promotes neuronal death through transposable element dysregulation in neurodegenerative tauopathies. *Nat Neurosci*. 2018;21(8):1038-1048.
63. Qiang L, Sun X, Austin TO, et al. Tau does not stabilize axonal microtubules but rather enables them to have long labile domains. *Curr Biol CB*. 2018;28(13):2181-2189.e4.
64. Marciniak E, Leboucher A, Caron E, et al. Tau deletion promotes brain insulin resistance. *J Exp Med*. 2017;214(8):2257-2269.
65. LoPresti P, Szuchet S, Papasozomenos SC, Zinkowski RP, Binder LI. Functional implications for the microtubule-associated protein tau: localization in oligodendrocytes. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 1995;92(22):10369-10373.
66. Lopes S, Lopes A, Pinto V, et al. Absence of tau triggers age-dependent sciatic nerve morphofunctional deficits and motor impairment. *Aging Cell*. 2016;15(2):208-216.
67. Biundo F, Del Prete D, Zhang H, Arancio O, D'Adamo L. A role for tau in learning, memory and synaptic plasticity. *Sci Rep*. 2018;8(1):3184.
68. Hu W, Zhang X, Tung YC, Xie S, Liu F, Iqbal K. Hyperphosphorylation determines both the spread and the morphology of tau pathology. *Alzheimers Dement J Alzheimers Assoc*. 2016;12(10):1066-1077.
69. Dujardin S, Commins C, Lathuiliere A, et al. Tau molecular diversity contributes to clinical heterogeneity in Alzheimer's disease. *Nat Med*. 2020;26(8):1256-1263.
70. Haj-Yahya M, Lashuel HA. Protein semisynthesis provides access to tau disease-associated post-translational modifications (PTMs) and paves the way to deciphering the tau PTM code in health and diseased states. *J Am Chem Soc*. 2018;140(21):6611-6621.
71. Josephs KA. Current understanding of neurodegenerative diseases associated with the protein Tau. *Mayo Clin Proc*. 2017;92(8):1291-1303.
72. Elahi FM, Miller BL. A clinicopathological approach to the diagnosis of dementia. *Nat Rev Neurol*. 2017;13(8):457-476.
73. La Joie R, Visani AV, Baker SL, et al. Prospective longitudinal atrophy in Alzheimer's disease correlates with the intensity and topography of baseline tau-PET. *Sci Transl Med*. 2020;12(524):eaau5732.
74. Brewer AA, Barton B. Visual cortex in aging and Alzheimer's disease: changes in visual field maps and population receptive fields. *Front Psychol*. 2014;5:74.
75. Giannakopoulos P, Gold G, Duc M, Michel JP, Hof PR, Bouras C. Neuroanatomic correlates of visual agnosia in Alzheimer's disease: a clinicopathologic study. *Neurology*. 1999;52(1):71-77.
76. Giannakopoulos P, Duc M, Gold G, Hof PR, Michel J-P, Bouras C. Pathologic correlates of apraxia in Alzheimer disease. *Arch Neurol*. 1998;55(5):689.
77. Hutton M, Lendon CL, Rizzu P, et al. Association of missense and 5'-splice-site mutations in tau with the inherited dementia FTDP-17. *Nature*. 1998;393(6686):702-705.
78. Spillantini MG, Murrell JR, Goedert M, Farlow MR, Klug A, Ghetti B. Mutation in the tau gene in familial multiple system tauopathy with presenile dementia. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 1998;95(13):7737-7741.
79. Poorkaj P, Bird TD, Wijsman E, et al. Tau is a candidate gene for chromosome 17 frontotemporal dementia. *Ann Neurol*. 1998;43(6):815-825.
80. Forrest SL, Kril JJ, Stevens CH, et al. Retiring the term FTDP-17 as MAPT mutations are genetic forms of sporadic frontotemporal tauopathies. *Brain J Neurol*. 2018;141(2):521-534.
81. Braak H, Braak E. Neuropathological staging of Alzheimer-related changes. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl)*. 1991;82(4):239-259.
82. Baker M, Litvan I, Houlden H, et al. Association of an extended haplotype in the tau gene with progressive supranuclear palsy. *Hum Mol Genet*. 1999;8(4):711-715.
83. Stefansson H, Helgason A, Thorleifsson G, et al. A common inversion under selection in Europeans. *Nat Genet*. 2005;37(2):129-137.
84. Houlden H, Baker M, Morris HR, et al. Corticobasal degeneration and progressive supranuclear palsy share a common tau haplotype. *Neurology*. 2001;56(12):1702-1706.
85. Conrad C, Andreadis A, Trojanowski JQ, et al. Genetic evidence for the involvement of tau in progressive supranuclear palsy. *Ann Neurol*. 1997;41(2):277-281.
86. Morris HR, Baker M, Yasojima K, et al. Analysis of tau haplotypes in Pick's disease. *Neurology*. 2002;59(3):443-445.
87. Caffrey TM, Joachim C, Wade-Martins R. Haplotype-specific expression of the N-terminal exons 2 and 3 at the human MAPT locus. *Neurobiol Aging*. 2008;29(12):1923-1929.

88. Trabzuni D, Wray S, Vandrovicova J, et al. MAPT expression and splicing is differentially regulated by brain region: relation to genotype and implication for tauopathies. *Hum Mol Genet.* 2012;21(18):4094-4103.
89. Jun G, Ibrahim-Verbaas CA, Vronskaya M, et al. A novel Alzheimer disease locus located near the gene encoding tau protein. *Mol Psychiatry.* 2016;21(1):108-117.
90. Bowles KR, Pugh DA, Farrell K, et al. 17q21.31 sub-haplotypes underlying H1-associated risk for Parkinson's disease and progressive supranuclear palsy converge on altered glial regulation. *bioRxiv.* 2019:860668.
91. McMillan P, Korvatska E, Poorkaj P, et al. Tau isoform regulation is region- and cell-specific in mouse brain. *J Comp Neurol.* 2008;511(6):788-803.
92. Hanes J, Zilka N, Bartkova M, Caletkova M, Dobrota D, Novak M. Rat tau proteome consists of six tau isoforms: implication for animal models of human tauopathies. *J Neurochem.* 2009;108(5):1167-1176.
93. Heidary G, Fortini ME. Identification and characterization of the Drosophila tau homolog. *Mech Dev.* 2001;108(1):171-178.
94. Karch CM, Kao AW, Karydas A, et al. A comprehensive resource for induced pluripotent stem cells from patients with primary Tauopathies. *Stem Cell Rep.* 2019;13(5):939-955.
95. Jabbari E, Tan MMX, Reynolds RH, et al. Common variation at the LRRK2 locus is associated with survival in the primary tauopathy progressive supranuclear palsy. *bioRxiv.* 2020. 2020.02.04.932335.
96. Quiroz YT, Sperling RA, Norton DJ, et al. Association between amyloid and tau accumulation in young adults with autosomal dominant Alzheimer disease. *JAMA Neurol.* 2018;75(5):548-556.
97. Guzmán-Vélez E, Martínez J, Papp K, et al. Associative memory and in vivo brain pathology in asymptomatic presenilin-1 E280A carriers. *Neurology.* 2020;95(10):e1312-e1321.
98. Arboleda-Velasquez JF, Lopera F, O'Hare M, et al. Resistance to autosomal dominant Alzheimer's disease in an APOE3 Christchurch homozygote: a case report. *Nat Med.* 2019;25(11):1680-1683.
99. Konermann S, Lotfy P, Brideau NJ, Oki J, Shokhirev MN, Hsu PD. Transcriptome engineering with RNA-targeting type VI-D CRISPR effectors. *Cell.* 2018;173(3):665-676.e14.
100. Walsh DM, Selkoe DJ. A critical appraisal of the pathogenic protein spread hypothesis of neurodegeneration. *Nat Rev Neurosci.* 2016;17(4):251-260.
101. Clavaguera F, Bolmont T, Crowther RA, et al. Transmission and spreading of tauopathy in transgenic mouse brain. *Nat Cell Biol.* 2009;11(7):909-913.
102. de Calignon A, Polydoro M, Suárez-Calvet M, et al. Propagation of tau pathology in a model of early Alzheimer's disease. *Neuron.* 2012;73(4):685-697.
103. Clavaguera F, Hench J, Goedert M, Tolnay M. Invited review: prion-like transmission and spreading of tau pathology. *Neuropathol Appl Neurobiol.* 2015;41(1):47-58.
104. Lee S-H, Le Pichon CE, Adolfsson O, et al. Antibody-mediated targeting of tau in vivo does not require effector function and microglial engagement. *Cell Rep.* 2016;16(6):1690-1700.
105. Falcon B, Cavallini A, Angers R, et al. Conformation determines the seeding potencies of native and recombinant Tau aggregates. *J Biol Chem.* 2015;290(2):1049-1065.
106. Kaufman SK, Sanders DW, Thomas TL, et al. Tau prion strains dictate patterns of cell pathology, progression rate, and regional vulnerability in vivo. *Neuron.* 2016;92(4):796-812.
107. Kaufman SK, Del Tredici K, Thomas TL, Braak H, Diamond MI. Tau seeding activity begins in the transentorhinal/entorhinal regions and anticipates phospho-tau pathology in Alzheimer's disease and PART. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl).* 2018;136(1):57-67.
108. Wu JW, Hussaini SA, Bastille IM, et al. Neuronal activity enhances tau propagation and tau pathology in vivo. *Nat Neurosci.* 2016;19(8):1085-1092.
109. Clavaguera F, Akatsu H, Fraser G, et al. Brain homogenates from human tauopathies induce tau inclusions in mouse brain. *Proc Natl Acad Sci.* 2013;110(23):9535-9540.
110. Sanders DW, Kaufman SK, DeVos SL, et al. Distinct tau prion strains propagate in cells and mice and define different tauopathies. *Neuron.* 2014;82(6):1271-1288.
111. Furman JL, Vaquer-Alicea J, White CL, Cairns NJ, Nelson PT, Diamond MI. Widespread tau seeding activity at early Braak stages. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl).* 2017;133(1):91-100.
112. Kaufman SK, Thomas TL, Del Tredici K, Braak H, Diamond MI. Characterization of tau prion seeding activity and strains from formaldehyde-fixed tissue. *Acta Neuropathol Commun.* 2017;5(1):41.
113. Saijo E, Ghetti B, Zanusso G, et al. Ultrasensitive and selective detection of 3-repeat tau seeding activity in Pick disease brain and cerebrospinal fluid. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl).* 2017;133(5):751-765.
114. Takeda S, Commins C, DeVos SL, et al. Seed-competent high-molecular-weight tau species accumulates in the cerebrospinal fluid of Alzheimer's disease mouse model and human patients. *Ann Neurol.* 2016;80(3):355-367.
115. Pooler AM, Phillips EC, Lau DHW, Noble W, Hanger DP. Physiological release of endogenous tau is stimulated by neuronal activity. *EMBO Rep.* 2013;14(4):389-394.
116. Dujardin S, Bégard S, Cailliez R, et al. Exosomes: a new mechanism for non-exosomal secretion of tau protein. *PLoS ONE.* 2014;9(6):e100760.
117. Takeda S, Wegmann S, Cho H, et al. Neuronal uptake and propagation of a rare phosphorylated high-molecular-weight tau derived from Alzheimer's disease brain. *Nat Commun.* 2015;6:8490.
118. Wang Y, Balaji V, Kaniyappan S, et al. The release and trans-synaptic transmission of tau via exosomes. *Mol Neurodegener.* 2017;12(1):5.
119. Holth JK, Fritsch SK, Wang C, et al. The sleep-wake cycle regulates brain interstitial fluid tau in mice and CSF tau in humans. *Science.* 2019;363(6429):880-884.
120. Sohn PD, Huang CT-L, Yan R, et al. Pathogenic tau impairs axon initial segment plasticity and excitability homeostasis. *Neuron.* 2019;104(3):458-470.e5.
121. Yamada K, Holth JK, Liao F, et al. Neuronal activity regulates extracellular tau in vivo. *J Exp Med.* 2014;211(3):387-393.
122. Polanco JC, Scicluna BJ, Hill AF, Götz J. Extracellular vesicles isolated from the brains of rTg4510 mice seed tau protein aggregation in a threshold-dependent manner. *J Biol Chem.* 2016;291(24):12445-12466.
123. Ruan Z, Pathak D, Venkatesan Kalavai S, et al. Alzheimer's disease brain-derived extracellular vesicles spread tau pathology in interneurons. *Brain J Neurol.* 2021;144(1):288-309.
124. Holmes BB, DeVos SL, Kfoury N, et al. Heparan sulfate proteoglycans mediate internalization and propagation of specific proteopathic seeds. *Proc Natl Acad Sci.* 2013;110(33):E3138-E3147.
125. Takahashi M, Miyata H, Kametani F, et al. Extracellular association of APP and tau fibrils induces intracellular aggregate formation of tau. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl).* 2015;129(6):895-907.
126. Rauch JN, Chen JJ, Sorum AW, et al. Tau internalization is regulated by 6-O sulfation on heparan sulfate proteoglycans (HSPGs). *Sci Rep.* 2018;8(1):6382.
127. Rauch JN, Luna G, Guzman E, et al. LRP1 is a master regulator of tau uptake and spread. *Nature.* 2020;580(7803):381-385.
128. Gómez-Ramos A, Díaz-Hernández M, Rubio A, Miras-Portugal MT, Avila J. Extracellular tau promotes intracellular calcium increase through M1 and M3 muscarinic receptors in neuronal cells. *Mol Cell Neurosci.* 2008;37(4):673-681.
129. Santacruz K, Lewis J, Spire T, et al. Tau suppression in a neurodegenerative mouse model improves memory function. *Science.* 2005;309(5733):476-481.
130. Brelstaff J, Tolkovsky AM, Ghetti B, Goedert M, Spillantini MG. Living neurons with tau filaments aberrantly expose

- phosphatidylserine and are phagocytosed by microglia. *Cell Rep*. 2018;24(8):1939-1948.e4.
131. Appel SH. A unifying hypothesis for the cause of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, parkinsonism, and Alzheimer disease. *Ann Neurol*. 1981;10(6):499-505.
 132. Saxena S, Caroni P. Selective neuronal vulnerability in neurodegenerative diseases: from stressor thresholds to degeneration. *Neuron*. 2011;71(1):35-48.
 133. de Haan W, Mott K, van Straaten ECW, Scheltens P, Stam CJ. Activity dependent degeneration explains hub vulnerability in Alzheimer's disease. *PLoS Comput Biol*. 2012;8(8):e1002582.
 134. Rittman T, Rubinov M, Vértes PE, et al. Regional expression of the MAPT gene is associated with loss of hubs in brain networks and cognitive impairment in Parkinson disease and progressive supranuclear palsy. *Neurobiol Aging*. 2016;48:153-160.
 135. Prusiner SB. Some speculations about prions, amyloid, and Alzheimer's disease. *N Engl J Med*. 1984;310(10):661-663.
 136. Baker HF, Ridley RM, Duchen LW, Crow TJ, Bruton CJ. Induction of β (A4)-amyloid in primates by injection of Alzheimer's disease brain homogenate. *Mol Neurobiol*. 1994;8(1):25-39.
 137. Goedert M. Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases: the prion concept in relation to assembled A β , tau, and α -synuclein. *Science*. 2015;349(6248):1255-555.
 138. Cope TE, Rittman T, Borchert RJ, et al. Tau burden and the functional connectome in Alzheimer's disease and progressive supranuclear palsy. *Brain J Neurol*. 2018;141(2):550-567.
 139. Frost B, Jacks RL, Diamond MI. Propagation of tau misfolding from the outside to the inside of a cell. *J Biol Chem*. 2009;284(19):12845-12852.
 140. Franzmeier N, Neitzel J, Rubinski A, et al. Functional brain architecture is associated with the rate of tau accumulation in Alzheimer's disease. *Nat Commun*. 2020;11(1):347.
 141. Vaquer-Alicea J, Diamond MI. Propagation of protein aggregation in neurodegenerative diseases. *Annu Rev Biochem*. 2019;88:785-810.
 142. Yang F, Roy Chowdhury S, Jacobs HIL, Johnson KA, Dutta J. A longitudinal model for tau aggregation in Alzheimer's disease based on structural connectivity. *Inf Process Med Imaging Proc Conf*. 2019;11492:384-393.
 143. Mutlu J, Landeau B, Gaubert M, de La Sayette V, Desgranges B, Chételat G. Distinct influence of specific versus global connectivity on the different Alzheimer's disease biomarkers. *Brain*. 2017;140(12):3317-3328.
 144. Honer M, Gobbi L, Knust H, et al. Preclinical evaluation of 18F-RO6958948, 11C-RO6931643, and 11C-RO6924963 as novel PET radiotracers for imaging tau aggregates in Alzheimer disease. *J Nucl Med*. 2018;59(4):675-681.
 145. Saint-Aubert L, Lemoine L, Chiotis K, Leuzy A, Rodriguez-Vieitez E, Nordberg A. Tau PET imaging: present and future directions. *Mol Neurodegener*. 2017;12(1):19.
 146. Sanabria Bohórquez S, Marik J, Ogasawara A, et al. [18F]GTP1 (Genentech Tau Probe 1), a radioligand for detecting neurofibrillary tangle tau pathology in Alzheimer's disease. *Eur J Nucl Med Mol Imaging*. 2019;46(10):2077-2089.
 147. Fodero-Tavoletti MT, Okamura N, Furumoto S, et al. 18F-THK523: a novel in vivo tau imaging ligand for Alzheimer's disease. *Brain J Neurol*. 2011;134(Pt 4):1089-1100.
 148. Wong DF, Comley R, Kuwabara H, et al. First in-human PET study of 3 novel tau radiopharmaceuticals: [11C]RO6924963, [11C]RO6931643, and [18F]RO6958948. *J Nucl Med*. 2018.
 149. Donohue MC, Sperling RA, Petersen R, et al. Association between elevated brain amyloid and subsequent cognitive decline among cognitively normal persons. *JAMA*. 2017;317(22):2305.
 150. Villemagne VL, Okamura N, Pejoska S, et al. Differential diagnosis in Alzheimer's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies via VMAT2 and amyloid imaging. *Neurodegener Dis*. 2012;10(1-4):161-165.
 151. Fleisher AS, Pontecorvo MJ, Devous MD, et al. Positron emission tomography imaging with [18F]flortaucipir and postmortem assessment of Alzheimer disease neuropathologic changes. *JAMA Neurol*. 2020;77(7):829-839.
 152. Lowe VJ, Lundt ES, Albertson SM, et al. Tau-positron emission tomography correlates with neuropathology findings. *Alzheimers Dement J Alzheimers Assoc*. 2020;16(3):561-571.
 153. Soleimani-Meigooni DN, Iaccarino L, La Joie R, et al. 18F-flortaucipir PET to autopsy comparisons in Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative diseases. *Brain J Neurol*. 2020;143(11):3477-3494.
 154. Jagust WJ. Imaging tau pathology-the next step. *JAMA Neurol*. 2020;77(7):796-797.
 155. Ghirelli A, Tosakulwong N, Weigand SD, et al. Sensitivity-specificity of tau and amyloid β positron emission tomography in frontotemporal lobar degeneration. *Ann Neurol*. 2020;88(5):1009-1022.
 156. Lois C, Gonzalez I, Johnson KA, Price JC. PET imaging of tau protein targets: a methodology perspective. *Brain Imaging Behav*. 2019;13(2):333-344.
 157. Sanchez JS, Becker JA, Jacobs HIL, et al. The cortical origin and initial spread of medial temporal tauopathy in Alzheimer's disease assessed with positron emission tomography. *Sci Transl Med*. 2021;13(577):eabc0655.
 158. Hanseeuw BJ, Betensky RA, Jacobs HIL, et al. Association of amyloid and Tau with cognition in preclinical Alzheimer disease: a longitudinal study. *JAMA Neurol*. 2019;76(8):915-924.
 159. Passamonti L, Vázquez Rodríguez P, Hong YT, et al. 18F-AV-1451 positron emission tomography in Alzheimer's disease and progressive supranuclear palsy. *Brain J Neurol*. 2017;140(3):781-791.
 160. Schonhaut DR, McMillan CT, Spina S, et al. 18 F-flortaucipir tau positron emission tomography distinguishes established progressive supranuclear palsy from controls and Parkinson disease: a multicenter study. *Ann Neurol*. 2017;82(4):622-634.
 161. Smith R, Schöll M, Honer M, Nilsson CF, Englund E, Hansson O. Tau neuropathology correlates with FDG-PET, but not AV-1451-PET, in progressive supranuclear palsy. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl)*. 2017;133(1):149-151.
 162. Whitwell JL, Höglinger GU, Antonini A, et al. Radiological biomarkers for diagnosis in PSP: where are we and where do we need to be?. *Mov Disord Off J Mov Disord Soc*. 2017;32(7):955-971.
 163. Cho H, Baek MS, Choi JY, et al. 18F-AV-1451 binds to motor-related subcortical gray and white matter in corticobasal syndrome. *Neurology*. 2017;89(11):1170-1178.
 164. McMillan CT, Irwin DJ, Nasrallah I, et al. Multimodal evaluation demonstrates in vivo 18F-AV-1451 uptake in autopsy-confirmed corticobasal degeneration. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl)*. 2016;132(6):935-937.
 165. Tsai RM, Bejanin A, Lesman-Segev O, et al. 18F-flortaucipir (AV-1451) tau PET in frontotemporal dementia syndromes. *Alzheimers Res Ther*. 2019;11(1):13.
 166. Lyoo CH, Cho H, Choi JY, Ryu YH, Lee MS. Tau positron emission tomography imaging in degenerative Parkinsonisms. *J Mov Disord*. 2018;11(1):1-12.
 167. Lemoine L, Leuzy A, Chiotis K, Rodriguez-Vieitez E, Nordberg A. Tau positron emission tomography imaging in tauopathies: the added hurdle of off-target binding. *Alzheimers Dement Diagn Assess Dis Monit*. 2018;10:232-236.
 168. Leuzy A, Chiotis K, Lemoine L, et al. Tau PET imaging in neurodegenerative tauopathies—still a challenge. *Mol Psychiatry*. 2019;24(8):1112-1134.
 169. Smith R, Santillo AF, Waldö ML, et al. 18 F-Flortaucipir in TDP-43 associated frontotemporal dementia. *Sci Rep*. 2019;9(1):6082.
 170. Marquie M, Normandin MD, Vanderburg CR, et al. Validating novel tau positron emission tomography tracer [F-18]-AV-1451 (T807) on postmortem brain tissue. *Ann Neurol*. 2015;78(5):787-800.

171. Marquié M, Normandin MD, Meltzer AC, et al. Pathological correlations of [F-18]-AV-1451 imaging in non-alzheimer tauopathies. *Ann Neurol*. 2017;81(1):117-128.
172. Marquié M, Agüero C, Amaral AC, et al. 18F]-AV-1451 binding profile in chronic traumatic encephalopathy: a postmortem case series. *Acta Neuropathol Commun*. 2019;7(1):164.
173. Pascoal TA, Therriault J, Benedet AL, et al. 18F-MK-6240 PET for early and late detection of neurofibrillary tangles. *Brain*. 2020;143(9):2818-2830.
174. Leuzy A, Smith R, Ossenkuppe R, et al. Diagnostic performance of RO948 F 18 tau positron emission tomography in the differentiation of Alzheimer disease from other neurodegenerative disorders. *JAMA Neurol*. 2020;77(8):1-12.
175. Kroth H, Oden F, Molette J, et al. Discovery and preclinical characterization of [18F]PI-2620, a next-generation tau PET tracer for the assessment of tau pathology in Alzheimer's disease and other tauopathies. *Eur J Nucl Med Mol Imaging*. 2019;46(10):2178-2189.
176. Weng C-C, Hsiao I-T, Yang Q-F, et al. Characterization of 18F-PM-PBB3 (18F-APN-1607) uptake in the rTg4510 mouse model of tauopathy. *Mol Basel Switz*. 2020;25(7):1750.
177. Villemagne V, Dore V, Mulligan R, et al. Evaluation of 18F-PI-2620, a second-generation selective tau tracer for the assessment of Alzheimer's and non-Alzheimer's tauopathies. *J Nucl Med*. 2018;59(1):410-410.
178. Su Y, Fu J, Yu J, et al. Tau PET imaging with [18F]PM-PBB3 in frontotemporal dementia with MAPT mutation. *J Alzheimers Dis JAD*. 2020;76(1):149-157.
179. Brendel M, Barthel H, van Eimeren T, et al. Assessment of 18F-PI-2620 as a biomarker in progressive supranuclear palsy. *JAMA Neurol*. 2020;77(11):1-13.
180. Lindberg A, Knight AC, Sohn D, et al. Radiosynthesis, in vitro and in vivo evaluation of [18F]CBD-2115 as a first-in-class radiotracer for imaging 4R-tauopathies. *ACS Chem Neurosci*. 2021;12(4):596-602.
181. Dani M, Edison P, Brooks DJ. Imaging biomarkers in tauopathies. *Parkinsonism Relat Disord*. 2016;22 Suppl 1:S26-28.
182. Ossenkuppe R, Rabinovici GD, Smith R, et al. Discriminative accuracy of [18F]flortaucipir positron emission tomography for Alzheimer disease vs other neurodegenerative disorders. *JAMA*. 2018;320(11):1151.
183. Mantyh WG, Spina S, Lee A, et al. Tau positron emission tomographic findings in a former US football player with pathologically confirmed chronic traumatic encephalopathy. *JAMA Neurol*. 2020;77(4):517-521.
184. Thijssen EH, La Joie R, Wolf A, et al. Diagnostic value of plasma phosphorylated tau181 in Alzheimer's disease and frontotemporal lobar degeneration. *Nat Med*. 2020;26(3):387-397.
185. Moscoso A, Grothe MJ, Ashton NJ, et al. Time course of phosphorylated-tau181 in blood across the Alzheimer's disease spectrum. *Brain*. 2021;144(1):325-339.
186. Janelidze S, Stomrud E, Smith R, et al. Cerebrospinal fluid p-tau217 performs better than p-tau181 as a biomarker of Alzheimer's disease. *Nat Commun*. 2020;11(1):1683.
187. Palmqvist S, Janelidze S, Quiroz YT, et al. Discriminative accuracy of plasma phospho-tau217 for Alzheimer disease vs other neurodegenerative disorders. *JAMA*. 2020;324(8):772-781.
188. Wildsmith K. Tau imaging in anti-tau clinical trials: [18F]GTP1 and the semorinemab biomarker strategy. Presented at the: Tau 2020; February 12, 2020; Washington, DC. <https://alz.org/tau2020/downloads/Tau2020-Agenda.pdf>. Accessed February 12, 2021.
189. Blennow K, Chen C, Cicognola C, et al. Cerebrospinal fluid tau fragment correlates with tau PET: a candidate biomarker for tangle pathology. *Brain J Neurol*. 2020;143(2):650-660.
190. Barthélemy NR, Bateman RJ, Hirtz C, et al. Cerebrospinal fluid phospho-tau T217 outperforms T181 as a biomarker for the differential diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and PET amyloid-positive patient identification. *Alzheimers Res Ther*. 2020;12(1):26.
191. Barthélemy NR, Horie K, Sato C, Bateman RJ. Blood plasma phosphorylated-tau isoforms track CNS change in Alzheimer's disease. *J Exp Med*. 2020;217(e20200861).
192. Cummings J, Lee G, Ritter A, Sabbagh M, Zhong K. Alzheimer's disease drug development pipeline: 2019. *Alzheimers Dement N Y N*. 2019;5:272-293.
193. Combs B, Hamel C, Kanaan NM. Pathological conformations involving the amino terminus of tau occur early in Alzheimer's disease and are differentially detected by monoclonal antibodies. *Neurobiol Dis*. 2016;94:18-31.
194. Nobuhara CK, DeVos SL, Commins C, et al. Tau antibody targeting pathological species blocks neuronal uptake and interneuron propagation of tau in vitro. *Am J Pathol*. 2017;187(6):1399-1412.
195. Yanamandra K, Kfoury N, Jiang H, et al. Anti-tau antibodies that block tau aggregate seeding in vitro markedly decrease pathology and improve cognition in vivo. *Neuron*. 2013;80(2):402-414.
196. Yanamandra K, Jiang H, Mahan TE, et al. Anti-tau antibody reduces insoluble tau and decreases brain atrophy. *Ann Clin Transl Neurol*. 2015;2(3):278-288.
197. Courade J-P, Angers R, Mairet-Coello G, et al. Epitope determines efficacy of therapeutic anti-Tau antibodies in a functional assay with human Alzheimer Tau. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl)*. 2018;136(5):729-745.
198. Albert M, Mairet-Coello G, Danis C, et al. Prevention of tau seeding and propagation by immunotherapy with a central tau epitope antibody. *Brain J Neurol*. 2019;142(6):1736-1750.
199. Bright J, Hussain S, Dang V, et al. Human secreted tau increases amyloid-beta production. *Neurobiol Aging*. 2015;36(2):693-709.
200. Borreca A, Latina V, Corsetti V, et al. AD-related N-terminal truncated tau is sufficient to recapitulate in vivo the early perturbations of human neuropathology: implications for immunotherapy. *Mol Neurobiol*. 2018;55(10):8124-8153.
201. Braak H, Del Tredici K. The pathological process underlying Alzheimer's disease in individuals under thirty. *Acta Neuropathol (Berl)*. 2011;121(2):171-181.
202. Biogen. A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Parallel-Group Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety of Intravenously Administered BII092 in Participants with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy. *clinicaltrials.gov*; 2020. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03068468>. Accessed February 11, 2021.
203. Genentech, Inc. A Phase II, Multicenter, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Parallel-Group, Efficacy, and Safety Study of MTAU9937A in Patients with Prodromal to Mild Alzheimer's Disease. *clinicaltrials.gov*; 2020. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03289143>. Accessed February 11, 2021.
204. Genentech, Inc. A Phase II, Multicenter, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Parallel-Group, Efficacy, and Safety Study of MTAU9937A in Patients with Moderate Alzheimer's Disease. *clinicaltrials.gov*; 2021. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03828747>. Accessed February 11, 2021.
205. Salloway S, Sperling R, Fox NC, et al. Two phase 3 trials of bapineuzumab in mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's disease. *N Engl J Med*. 2014;370(4):322-333.
206. DeVos SL, Corjuc BT, Commins C, et al. Tau reduction in the presence of amyloid-β prevents tau pathology and neuronal death in vivo. *Brain J Neurol*. 2018;141(7):2194-2212.
207. Richter M, Mewes A, Fritsch M, Krügel U, Hoffmann R, Singer D. Doubly phosphorylated peptide vaccines to protect transgenic P301S mice against Alzheimer's disease like tau aggregation. *Vaccines*. 2014;2(3):601-623.
208. DeVos SL, Miller TM. Antisense oligonucleotides: treating neurodegeneration at the level of RNA. *Neurother J Am Soc Exp Neurother*. 2013;10(3):486-497.

209. DeVos SL, Miller RL, Schoch KM, et al. Tau reduction prevents neuronal loss and reverses pathological tau deposition and seeding in mice with tauopathy. *Sci Transl Med*. 2017;9(374):eaag0481.
210. Woodcock J, LaVange LM. Master protocols to study multiple therapies, multiple diseases, or both. *N Engl J Med*. 2017;377(1):62-70.
211. Tsai RM, Miller Z, Koestler M, et al. Reactions to multiple ascending doses of the microtubule stabilizer TPI-287 in patients with Alzheimer disease, progressive supranuclear palsy, and corticobasal syndrome. *JAMA Neurol*. 2020;77(2):215-224.
212. Kariolis MS, Wells RC, Getz JA, et al. Brain delivery of therapeutic proteins using an Fc fragment blood-brain barrier transport vehicle in mice and monkeys. *Sci Transl Med*. 2020;12(545):eaay1359.
213. Ullman JC, Arguello A, Getz JA, et al. Brain delivery and activity of a lysosomal enzyme using a blood-brain barrier transport vehicle in mice. *Sci Transl Med*. 2020;12(545):eaay1163.
214. Nalawansa DA, Crews CM. PROTACs: an emerging therapeutic modality in precision medicine. *Cell Chem Biol*. 2020;27(8):998-1014.
215. Rainwater Charitable Foundation. Nearly \$4 million in research funding for promising new treatments in Alzheimer's and other dementia. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/nearly-4-million-in-research-funding-for-promising-new-treatments-in-alzheimers-and-other-dementia-301015969.html>. Accessed February 22, 2021.
216. Tau Consortium. Pipeline. Tau Consortium. <https://tauconsortium.org/pipeline/> Accessed February 22, 2021.

How to cite this article: Sexton C, Snyder H, Beher D, et al. Current directions in tau research: Highlights from Tau 2020. *Alzheimer's Dement*. 2021;1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.12452>