

University of South Carolina Prevention Research Center



What were the goals of the University of South Carolina's HBRN?

The primary goal of the South Carolina Healthy Brain Research Network (SC-HBRN) is to advance public health research about cognitive health and healthy aging. To achieve this, SC-HBRN works with partners to take actions found in the *Healthy Brain Initiative: Public Health Road Map for State and National Partnerships, 2013-2018*. In addition, SC-HBRN:

- 1) Established a research agenda on cognitive health and healthy aging.
- 2) Advanced collaborative and applied research in cognitive health and healthy aging.
- 3) Supported fellowship training of its scholars.

What did SC-HBRN accomplish?

During the 2014-2019 funding cycle, SC-HBRN researched and promoted public health strategies to increase awareness about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias; promoted consistency of cognitive health messaging among local, state, and national partners; and contributed data about cognitive health and impairment to national reports and partners.

SC-HBRN investigators helped relaunch the Office for the Study of Aging (OSA) in 2017, which manages the state's Alzheimer's Disease Registry. It is the nation's most comprehensive registry of Alzheimer's disease cases, and has maintained a record of diagnosed cases in South Carolina since 1988.

Additionally, SC-HBRN researchers and scholars

have published 10 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals, made 18 scientific presentations, and evaluated the Dementia Dialogues Training program. More than 22,000 people have been trained, and over 11,000 have completed the Dementia Dialogues course.



From left: Daniela Friedman, PhD, SC-HBRN Principal Investigator, and Kristie Kannaley, HBRN Scholar,

What is the HBRN Scholars Program?

SC-HBRN Scholars collaborate with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), community partners, and other HBRN universities on research projects. These resulted in conference presentations and peer-reviewed journal articles, including "Physical Activity and Brain Health: An analysis of messages from organizations and caregiver perceptions" (*Gerontology & Geriatric Medicine*, 2019). During this funding cycle, nine graduate and undergraduate scholars received training in cognitive health and aging.



What public health programs did SC-HBRN evaluate or create?

In partnership with the Puerto Rico Department of Health, SC-HBRN helped evaluate the Un Cafe por el Alzheimer program, which uses social media platforms and in-person sessions to educate the public about Alzheimer's disease.

Additionally, SC-HBRN developed pre- and post-surveys to assess the Dementia Dialogues® Training Program.

What is the SC-HBRN legacy?

The legacy of the SC-HBRN includes ongoing research and collaborations with partners and community organizations in South Carolina with whom it has worked since 2014; the scholars who were trained through various research projects, and its network of aging and cognitive health researchers across the state and nation. Additionally, SC-HBRN scholars have been extremely successful and are continuing their work in aging and cognitive health. The Scholars program training model, including its unique community-academic partnership, can be used to guide and strengthen other public health and aging-focused projects.

How will SC-HBRN's work benefit the caregiving community?

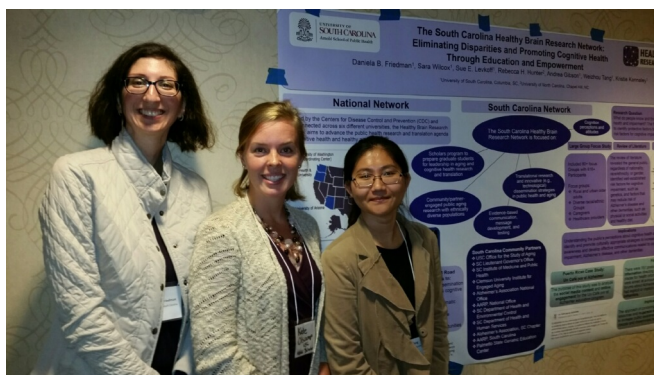
One study thematically analyzed blogs written by caregivers and people with Alzheimer's disease to understand their experiences. This type of information is crucial to understanding the experiences of people who live with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers.

A second study reviewed Alzheimer's disease content on 36 mobile apps in the Google Play

The Healthy Brain Research Network was a thematic network of CDC's Prevention Research Center Program and was funded by Cooperative Agreement: U48DP005000. The findings are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

Store and assessed the quality of information. The study concluded that these apps can benefit the public but health and technology experts are needed to improve information quality and usability.

A third study examined the volume and content of brain health and physical activity messaging from national physical activity organizations to caregivers. It resulted in identifying the need for new partnerships in public health practice to help improve the type of information being disseminated.



From left: SC-HBRN Principal Investigator Daniela Friedman, and HBRN Scholars Katharine Olscamp and Weizhou Tang at a scientific presentation in New Orleans.

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"The focus of our network has really been examining diverse communities' perceptions about cognitive health, what people think they can do to reduce risk of developing cognitive impairment, and how we can work together with partners to develop messages that are going to be evidence-based, evidence-informed, and relevant to communities in South Carolina."

—Daniela Friedman, PhD
WIS News, Channel 10