From Labs to Lives

How Research Funding Solves Real-World Problems

NIH-Funded Research Tracks Brain Health Over Time

At UC Davis, Audrey Fan is pioneering new MRI technologies to understand how the brain uses oxygen as we age. With funding support from the NIH, her lab measures subtle changes in brain metabolism to detect early signs of cognitive decline—before conditions like dementia take hold. Her work helps uncover how aging and vascular injury affect brain function and could lead to earlier interventions for at-risk patients.

Helping Humanity

Fan's imaging research supports hundreds of older adults in our community and builds critical knowledge for treating Alzheimer's and other brain diseases. Her imaging tools can detect early shifts in how the brain uses oxygen — often before tangible signs of memory loss appear. Without sustained funding, these long-term studies could be disrupted, breaking trust in participants and losing critical data needed to understand how aging affects brain health. Continued investment means earlier diagnosis, better treatments and hope for those at risk of cognitive decline.

> ***If federal funding is cut, we will not only lose critical time points in observing the brain, we risk breaking long-standing community ties with our participants who volunteer their time for our studies and deeply inform the impact of our science."***
> ***— Audrey Fan, Ph.D.***

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