ADNI Biostatistics Core
Conference call, 8 May 2007.

Present on call: Laurel Beckett, Danielle Harvey, Qian Weng, Rob Croop, Monica

Laurel presented the analytic plan and some preliminary analyses of clinical data at the Boston meeting. The steering committee consensus was favorable on our plan though everyone is very interested in more details.

MRI and PET reports in Boston detailed some of the challenges in cleaning and processing data. It will clearly be at least two months before we have even the easiest, non-data-driven summaries up on LONI (e.g. hippocampal volume.) This is somewhat discouraging, but it's impressive how careful the processing is and how many previously unsuspected problems they have uncovered and fixed. We will wait till we have data to schedule a working group on how to analyze.

Meanwhile, we will focus on analyzing change in clinical data. The variables we are working with clearly have some limitations, especially if confined to certain subgroups; for example we have both floor and ceiling effects. Laurel has worked previously with composite measures to get around some of these problems, and Ron Peterson mentioned that he is also doing this in the clinical core for MCI trial. We will explore with them what they are doing and will take a fairly aggressive data analysis strategy to identify clinical composite measures that capture a lot of clinical change in stable fashion, both across and within diagnostic groups.

Laurel will work with Art and see if we can come up with a hands-on demonstration of how to download data. It will probably require two separate sessions: one on how to download clinical data and one on how to download the images. Copy Rob and Eric on how to do it. Danielle notes that right now, you download a big zip file with about 50 individual files. Right now, you can't query. LONI is discussing setting up query forms but that is not a high priority for them at this time. Danielle and Laurel will communicate with Eric and LONI folks about posting a simple explanation of the download process, showing perhaps a screen shot and explaining what you get and where to find information about files in the zip file.

Exact date of birth has been removed from clinical core data; there is just year of birth, and age. What about calculated age at baseline? (Could calculate and truncate to one decimal place.) We probably could get by with age truncated either to one or zero decimal places without much impact, as long as we have exact date of the exams.

Danielle says not much happening with conference calls for PET and MRI; probably more on the next biostat call.

Next call is Tuesday 22 May. Laurel will be out of the country; Danielle will chair.