ADNI Conference Call
17 July 2007

On call: Laurel Beckett, Qian Weng, Rob Croop, Paul Maguire.

Qian is continuing analysis of the clinical data. Baseline is complete and many participants are now at 2-3 observations. Our goal is to understand behavior of each measure both at baseline and over time, so we can develop models for heterogeneity and see how well paths track with imaging or biomarker data. We expect to see ceiling effects in some metrics, especially for normals. We will keep people posted on our results.

A decision was made on the MRI call on Friday to begin posting imaging summary measures through LONI almost immediately (within 2-3 weeks) even though they are preliminary. The imaging groups are very concerned that the data sets will be incomplete and still subject to substantial revisions, but Mike Weiner pointed out that some groups are already using their data to publish abstracts. A number of steps will be taken to encourage caution in analyzing and publishing preliminary data.

1. The data will be versioned, and version and date will be included in download and in documentation.
2. The documentation will include strong warnings about preliminary nature and guidance in the need to document the version of the download used.
3. There will be a check-box on the data agreement that says something like, "I understand that these data are preliminary. I will include the version and date of download and a statement that data are preliminary in my abstracts and papers."
4. People will be asked to provide version and date to the publications committee along with manuscripts.
5. LONI will send out a notice to people who have downloaded, alerting them when a new version has been uploaded.
6. Old versions will be archived to allow cross-checking if needed.

We anticipate having 2-3 imaging summary data sets available sometime in early August. With this in mind, we would like to schedule an on-line / telephone data download instruction around Labor Day or soon after. We plan to use a conference call format, supplemented with web-based examples and instruction, to show people what data are available in summary form (clinical, demographic, first imaging summaries). We will demonstrate downloads and show how we get data into R or SAS for analysis. Danielle and I will check with the UC Davis experts on what tech support might make this most productive. We will post sample code and some of the simple results, and any cautions we can add on individual variables. We know that our experience with the imaging summaries will be limited at that point so additional material will be posted as it becomes available.

Documentation of these data sets is sparse at present. For example, there is no online explanation of the different neuropsych tests used. We hope to encourage that more documentation be posted.

Paul and Rob will check with Eric Siemers and try to get a list started of people who would be interested in a telephone instruction session (maybe 2-3 hours, with web content to supplement). We would like to know how many people we can expect, and whether there are any weeks that would be especially good. We will work on setting up a time once we have a rough idea how many folks are interested. A more detailed description and "sign-up" will come out in a week or so.

Paul raised the question of whether the summary measures will be posted for phantoms. One statistical question is whether these can be used to correct or adjust the images or summaries. This is not in our analytic plan. Laurel will ask Cliff about this.

Our next call is scheduled in two weeks on 31 July. Laurel and Qian will be at JSM; we will check to see whether Danielle is available. If not, we'll send e-mail and let you know. We hope to have good news on imaging summaries by then!