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**Subject:** APA Headlines: Thinning Retina May Be A Sign Of Declining Cognitive Function, Researchers Say  
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Good morning Ms Cathy Thompson

July 28, 2016

### Leading The News

#### **Thinning Retina May Be A Sign Of Declining Cognitive Function, Researchers Say.**

[MedPage Today](#) (7/27, Fiore) reports, "A thinning retina may be a sign of declining cognitive function," research indicated. After analyzing "data from the UK Biobank," investigators found that a "thinner retinal nerve fiber layer at baseline was associated with worse performance on cognitive testing three years later." The findings of the 32,028-participant study were presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference. Meanwhile, a second study revealed that "polarized light could detect amyloid deposits in the retina, which could ultimately be used as a non-invasive way to predict cognitive decline." Commenting on the latter study, Eliezer Masliah, MD, of the National Institute on Aging, "said that 'whatever happens in the retina could be reflective of what's happening in the central nervous system.'" Dr. Masliah was not involved in either study. [Medscape](#) (7/27, Anderson) covers the first study.

#### Psychiatric News Alert



[Low Scores on Odor Identification Test May Predict Early-Stage Alzheimer's Disease](#)

[Quetiapine Appears Effective as Monotherapy for PTSD, Study Shows](#)

#### MACRA Webinar Available Online

APA hosted a live webinar on payment reform and quality reporting under the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) on June 29. The webinar, now available online, provides psychiatrist with a basic understanding of the key features of MACRA and how they may impact their practices. View the [MACRA presentation](#).

You can also view and receive credit for an accredited version of the webinar through the [APA Learning Center](#).



### Psychiatric Treatment/Disorders

#### **Changes Occurring In Teens' Brains As They Mature May Help Explain Why First Signs Of Mental Illness May Appear During This Time, Scan Study Indicates.**

[HealthDay](#) (7/27, Preidt) reports, "Changes that occur in teens' brains as they mature may help explain why the first signs of mental illness tend to appear during this time," a magnetic resonance imaging scan study suggests. Investigators found not only that the "cortex becomes thinner" as adolescents grow older, but also that "the brain regions that undergo the greatest changes during the teen years are also where genes associated with schizophrenia risk are most strongly expressed." The findings of the nearly 300-participant study were published July 25 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

#### **People Living In Affluent Countries May Be More Likely To Suffer From PTSD Than Those In Poorer Nations, Researchers Say.**

[The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (7/27, Boseley) reports, "People living in affluent countries are more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder than those in poorer nations," researchers found. The large study revealed that "Canada has the highest levels of PTSD, followed by the Netherlands, Australia, the US and New Zealand," while "the lowest levels were found in Nigeria, China and Romania." The [findings](#) were published in the July issue of the British Journal of Psychiatry.

## Healthy Lifestyle Best Alzheimer's Defense, Studies Show.

[USA Today](#) (7/27, Weintraub) reports several new studies presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in Toronto confirmed that "living a healthy, non-smoking, socially active and interesting life remains the best way to prevent dementia." Moreover, research shows there are currently no "medications that can prevent the fatal disease, or extend the lives of the more than 5 million Americans currently suffering from Alzheimer's."

### Psychiatry and Public Health

## Army Secretary Highlights Importance Of Mental Health.

The [AP](#) (7/27, Bussewitz) reports Army Secretary Eric Fanning said the Army and other military branches are paying more attention to behavioral health. The military is conducting research into how military deployment can exacerbate anger, and they're encouraging soldiers to seek out mental health treatment prior to deployment "to mitigate the effects of anger after" they return, Fanning said. He recently expressed concern that the recent mass shootings in Dallas and Baton Rouge were perpetrated by military veterans, "but he said the research doesn't show any cause and effect between military service and what happens after soldiers leave the armed forces." The AP also mentions researchers at Tel Aviv University released a study this month that "found computerized training before deployment could help prevent flare-ups of post-traumatic stress disorder."

## Many Patients With Alzheimer's Disease Charged Additional Fees By Facilities Not Designed To Care For Them.

[STAT](#) (7/27, Thielking) reports many patients with Alzheimer's disease are being forced into facilities that charge additional fees to care for people with the condition. The article points out that spots are limited in facilities that are specialized in caring for people with Alzheimer's disease, so many are forced into other facilities.

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### Psychiatric Medication Update

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## Experimental Alzheimer's Medication Fails In Clinical Trial, But May Be Effective As Monotherapy.

The [New York Times](#) (7/27, Pollack, Subscription Publication) reports that TauRx Therapeutics' experimental Alzheimer's disease medicine, LMTX, "failed to slow the rate of decline in mental ability and daily functioning in its first large clinical trial." However, the data provided a "hint...that it might be effective" as a monotherapy, rather than as an add-on treatment. However, "some experts not involved in the study were skeptical about drawing conclusions from a small subset of patients, especially since there was no obvious explanation why LMTX would be expected to work only in patients not getting other" medications.

[Reuters](#) (7/27, Steenhuysen) reports that in the late-stage clinical trial, LMTX "reduced the rate of decline in cognitive and functional skills by 85 percent" in patients taking it alone. National Institute on Aging's Dr. Laurie

Ryan said the findings were "intriguing" but warned that "it doesn't tell us a lot yet at this point."

### Wednesday's Lead Stories

- [Men With Alzheimer's May Have Atypical Symptoms, May Be Younger At Diagnosis, Research Suggests.](#)
- [Small Study Examines Positive Effects Of Dementia Diagnosis.](#)
- [Department Of Education Issues Guidelines Aimed At Preventing Schools From Discriminating Against Students With AD/HD.](#)

• **WHO Moving Toward Declassifying Transgender Identity As A Mental Disorder.**

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