

Hi everyone

My name is Aya Arrar, I am a fourth year PhD student in the neuroscience department at Western University. I would first like to say thank you for your support that allows me to work on research that I am truly passionate about.

When I was in my undergraduate studies, my grandmother got diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and while I was familiar with the science behind the disorder, I was unaware of the struggles Alzheimer's patients face until I started to volunteer at the Alzheimer's society.

This experience only reinforced my interest in Alzheimer's research.

Throughout my graduate studies I have been investigating the heterogeneity that exists in the disease. More specifically, I am looking at how genetic risk factors interact with known disease outcomes to cause behavioral problems. Due to Alzheimer's impacting mostly women, our lab is highly interested in understanding how Alzheimer's manifests differently in terms of sex.

Using techniques and models that are thought to be highly translatable, I use a mouse model that recapitulates important parts of human disease to see how attention specifically is impacted. While some people might think of Alzheimer's as a memory disorder, various behavioral aspects are impaired even prior to memory. Thus, I am interested in attention as it is one of the earliest domains impacted.

With that I hope to better understand the diversity that exists in the disease to better understand the complex disease that is Alzheimer's.

Thank you all for your time and for this opportunity.

Best,

Aya Arrar