

 Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

PBS Alzheimer's documentary features School of Medicine

Program focuses on the difficulties, expense of caring for people with the disease

by **Tamara Bhandari** • January 27, 2017



PBS/TPT NATIONAL PRODUCTIONS

"Alzheimer's: Every Minute Counts" is a documentary on PBS that explores the impact of the Alzheimer's epidemic. Washington University School of Medicine is featured in the documentary. In a still (above) from the documentary, Dr. Beau M. Ances meets with Alzheimer's patient Sonia Cardona and her daughter, Daisy Duarte (right).

A PBS documentary about Alzheimer's disease, which first aired Wednesday, Jan. 25, features a Washington University School of Medicine faculty member as well as participants in a clinical trial led by the School of Medicine.

The program, titled “**Alzheimer’s: Every Minute Counts**,” explores the impact of the growing Alzheimer’s epidemic. The neurodegenerative disease slowly erases people’s memories and leaves them confused and unable to care for themselves. The disease is common, affecting about one in nine people over age 65, and expensive; an assisted-living facility costs upwards of \$40,000 a year. The burden on families and the health-care system is expected to increase as baby boomers reach their golden years.

The program follows Daisy Duarte and her mother, Sonia Cardona, who participate in a study led by the School of Medicine to evaluate whether drug treatments can prevent or delay Alzheimer’s in people with a genetic predisposition to develop the disease at a young age. Duarte and Cardona come to the School of Medicine from their home in Springfield, Mo., to be evaluated by their doctor, **Beau M. Ances, MD, PhD**.

Participants in the study, known as the **Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer’s Network-Trials Unit**, are in families that carry one of several genetic mutations that lead to early-onset Alzheimer’s. Cardona, now 60, stopped recognizing her daughter years ago and is beginning to forget how to feed herself. Duarte, who inherited the genetic mutation from her mother, can expect to develop Alzheimer’s symptoms by age 60 herself.

Ances, a professor of neurology who also treats patients at **Barnes-Jewish Hospital**, speaks about the impact of the disease on his patients and their caregivers. Duarte, who is the primary caregiver for her mother, “sees herself in the mirror” as her mother’s health declines.

“**Alzheimer’s: Every Minute Counts**,” produced by TPT National Productions, will be available online at pbs.org.

SENIOR MEDICAL SCIENCES WRITER

Tamara Bhandari

Tamara Bhandari covers pathology, immunology, medical microbiology, cell biology, neurology, and radiology. She holds a bachelor’s degree in molecular biophysics and biochemistry and in sociology from Yale University, a master’s in public health/infectious diseases from the University of California, Berkeley, and

a PhD in infectious disease immunology from the University of California, San Diego.

314-286-0122

tbhandari@wustl.edu

MEDIA CONTACT

Judy Martin Finch, Director of Media Relations

314-286-0105

martinju@wustl.edu