

Tulane studying health effects of aspirin in older adults

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Tulane University researchers are participating in an international five-year study testing if low doses of aspirin can help older people live well for longer by delaying the onset of illnesses. The ASPREE, or ASPIrin in Reducing Events in the Elderly study, is funded by the National Institute on Aging, one of the National Institutes of Health. About 19,000 people in both the United States and Australia will take part in the study. In the United States, approximately 2,500 people will be enrolled at about 37 sites.

Leading the Tulane study center are Dr. William Robinson III, principal investigator of the Minority-Based Community Clinical Oncology Program, and co-principal investigator Dr. Eboni Price-Haywood, associate professor of Clinical Medicine in the section of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics.

Earlier studies have shown that low doses of aspirin reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack in middle-aged people and may prevent some forms of cancer and cognitive decline (i.e., thinking problems, such as memory loss and dementia). However, it remains unclear if the overall benefits of aspirin in older people are greater than the risks, such as bleeding.

The Tulane center is seeking to enroll African American and Hispanic men and women 65 years old and up and members of other ethnicities 70 years old and up. Participants will take either a low-dose aspirin tablet or placebo tablet (sugar pill) for a period of five years. All participants will receive annual check-ups tracking key measurements of their health and well-being.

"The ASPREE trial will be a major step forward in the study of cancer prevention, as well as an opportunity for New Orleanians to take charge of their health by pursuing wellness, instead of just enduring illness," says Dr. Robinson.

Those interested in participating in the study should contact Alexandria Augustus, clinical research coordinator, at 504-988-6124.