

CAF/18/08 - Symptoms of SVD: identifying non-traditional neurological and cognitive symptoms of cerebral small vessel disease

As people get older, it is common to develop damage within small brain blood vessels which damage the brain, visible on brain scans. This damage can build up over time, leading to walking problems, vascular dementia and stroke. The reason for this is not fully understood.

We think that people get quite subtle symptoms from this damage. These symptoms might be an early warning sign. Symptoms include things like mild problems with thinking, walking and mood. Patients and their doctors may not yet realise that these symptoms could be important.

Proposed research:

Using detailed surveys and patient assessments, I aim to find out whether adults with early abnormalities on their brain scans are in fact getting any of these subtle symptoms. I will also perform regular detailed tests of thinking and brain scans to look for development of any abnormalities over time.

Outcomes and benefits:

This area has not been studied before. My research will test whether simple questions about early symptoms can predict problems later on. If we can tie specific symptoms to changes on brain scans, this will let us to spot people at high risk of stroke and vascular dementia much earlier.