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# NIH Awards Coriell \$16M to Expand Gene Repository for Neurological Conditions

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**Coriell Institute for Medical Research** has won a five-year, \$16.3 million contract from the National Institutes of Health that will facilitate the institute's ongoing genetic research on neurological disorders.

The award is a renewal of CIMR's ongoing collaboration with the National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Stroke to collect and analyze samples for NINDS' Human Genetics Resource Center.

CIMR was originally placed in charge of establishing the resource center in 2002 to serve as a central, government-funded biorepository for clinical and genetic data from de-identified participants. In the following five years, CIMR gathered samples and clinical data from nearly 24,000 individuals and with this information scientists published more than 90 papers on genetic risk associations for neurological diseases, such as ALS, Parkinson's disease, stroke, and epilepsy.

The current award of \$16.3 million from NIH represents a renewal of this original collaboration, extending the relationship for another five years and granting additional resources to further expand the biorepository by 30,000 unique genetic samples.

With the data gathered in the repository, CIMR will conduct a study of genetic ancestry and population stratification, and the information will be available for other scientists to use, Courtney Sill, CIMR communications director, told *Pharmacogenomics Reporter* this week.

"Genome-wide association studies using samples and data from the NINDS repository are not limited to Coriell," Sill added. "Researchers around the world utilize this resource in their pursuit to better understand the mechanisms of neurologic disease."

A large repository, such as the one CIMR and NINDS are working together to amass for

neurological conditions, is necessary to facilitated research into the genetic underpinnings of heritable diseases.

"Because most heritable human diseases, including many neurological diseases, are a result of multiple genetic risk factors acting in combination with one another and with environmental components, the discovery process can be daunting and very difficult for any one biomedical research laboratory to achieve on its own," CIMR said in a statement.

This project with NINDS to collate genetic data for neurological conditions is separate from the Coriell Personalized Medicine Collaborative, or CPMC. Launched in December 2007, CPMC aims to study the impact of genomic information on medical decision-making. CPMC aims to ultimately collect genetic risk data on 100,000 participants, but participants can only learn about their genetic susceptibility for actionable medical conditions that have been approved by an independent oversight board [see [\*PGx Reporter 06-17-2009\*](#)].

The CPMC oversight board has so far approved the following conditions: prostate cancer, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, age-related macular degeneration, melanoma, colon cancer, heart disease, iron overload/hemochromatosis, inflammatory bowel disease, and obesity. However, CPMC researchers do collect information about study participants' family and personal history of certain neurological conditions, such as Lou Gehrig's disease, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, autism, stroke, and others.

CIMR estimates that neurological disorders, such as stroke, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, and autism, affect approximately 50 million people in the US annually.

"The CPMC study will almost certainly report on neurological variants in the future," Sill noted.