

THE SCIENCE OF AGING

An Institute on Aging Publication

COVID'S RISK TO OLDER ADULTS

If you've tested positive for COVID-19 recently, the omicron variant is the likely culprit. This variant is thought to be particularly contagious, even among the vaccinated, especially among older adults. Rate of infection has reached record highs in the last month, likely due largely in part to holiday gatherings.

According to a recent article in the New York Times, while hospitalization rates for children and vaccinated individuals under 50 years old remain low, COVID "has continued to present a meaningful amount of risk to older people, despite vaccination status." But with omicron's reputation as a milder infection, will this situation change? "It is too soon to know," the article adds, "but the safest assumption - absent more data - is that Covid will remain dangerous for the elderly."

Penn Medicine's **Aaron Richterman, MD, MPH**, a clinical fellow in Infectious Diseases at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, agrees. "There is a strong rationale for reasonable efforts to mitigate transmission, particularly over the next four weeks," he told the New York Times.

HOW CAN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE TEST RESULTS BE DISCLOSED ETHICALLY?

Genetic tests to determine the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease (AD) or the presence of AD pathology are becoming increasingly common. In a recent JAMA Network article, Penn Memory Center's **Emily Largent, PhD, JD, RN** weighed in on the topic, urging Federal law to consider the complexity of AD test results and suggesting they "should be brought into the 21st Century Cures Act (Cures Act)."

Penn Memory Center recently featured the article highlighting a few key takeaways including:

- Patients and families can understand AD gene and biomarker test results with the appropriate education.
 - Reports of test results should use plain and easy to comprehend language, not an abundance of medical jargon.
 - Educational materials should be evidence-based and be made widely available.
 - There should be increased access to expert postdisclosure education and counseling.

The Cures Act Final Rule, according to The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, supports seamless and secure access, exchange, and use of electronic health information and is designed to give patients and their healthcare providers secure access to this data.

UPCOMING EVENT | FEBRUARY 23, 2022 | 3:00 - 6:00 PM

VIRTUAL PENN FTD CENTER FAMILIAL CONFERENCE: UNCOVERING THE GENETICS OF FTD/ALS

Join the Penn Frontotemporal Degeneration (FTD) Center for their second annual Familial Conference: Uncovering the Genetics. During this virtual conference you will have the chance to hear from genetic counselors, neurologists, and social workers on the genetics of FTD and ALS—and have the chance to ask your questions in real-time.

Learn more at: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/ftd/familial-conference.html>