

TRACK-FA NEWSLETTER

Issue 02 – December 2022

TRACK-FA

TRACK-FA is a longitudinal natural history study that tracks brain and spinal cord changes in individuals with Friedreich's ataxia (FA). We have a team of researchers from Australia, USA, Germany, Brazil and Canada in collaboration with global industry partners. We are testing the sensitivity of neuroimaging biomarkers to provide a basis to include them in future clinical trials.

Why biomarkers?

Measuring the impact of treatments for Friedreich's ataxia is challenging. Biomarkers can help us understand if treatments are targeting the right tissues in the brain and spinal cord more quickly. This will be important for next generation gene therapies that aim to target a specific region of the brain and/or spinal cord in order to slow down progression of disease.

At a glance

Baseline recruitment update

As of November 2022, 165 individuals have been enrolled globally, including 122 Friedreich's ataxia participants and 43 healthy matched controls, whose ages range from 6 to 42 years old (Figure 1).

This means that we have now reached over half of our overall recruitment target – but we are still in need of many more in order to achieve our goal.

Recruitment summary (Nov 2022) by participant group and age

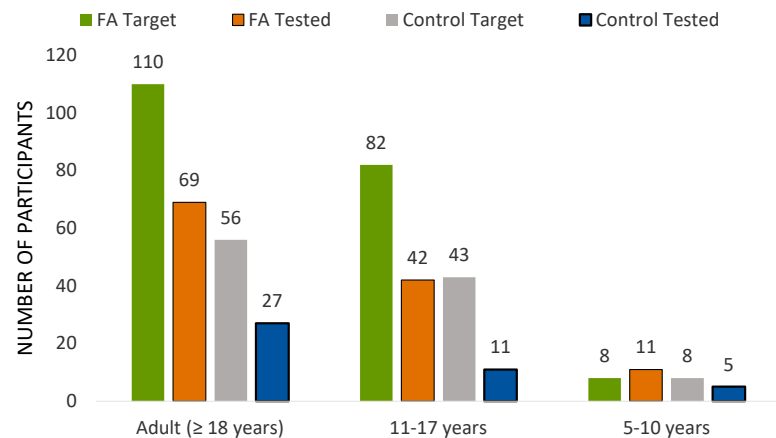


Figure 1.

Follow-up study visits are underway

As of November 2022, around 55 participants have returned to complete their second TRACK-FA study visit (see Figure 2). The longitudinal design is a key feature of the TRACK-FA study. By following individuals over two years, and across three study visits, we will be able to discover sensitive neuroimaging biomarkers of disease progression of FA. Our earliest participants will start their third and final study visit for TRACK-FA in February 2023.

Cumulative study-wide recruitment



Figure 2.



Statistics summary

Across study visits 1 and 2, our participants have so far contributed to over:

- 815 clinical tests
- 220 blood samples
- 220 MRI sessions
- 565 cognitive and mood assessments
- 220 speech assessments

We thank everyone who continues to participate in TRACK-FA and contributes to the growing database to build our knowledge!

TRACK-FA scientific publication

We are delighted to announce that we have published our first TRACK-FA scientific article! Our article presents the background on the TRACK-FA study and the scientific procedures. You can read our article for free online here: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0269649>

Campinas commences TRACK-FA

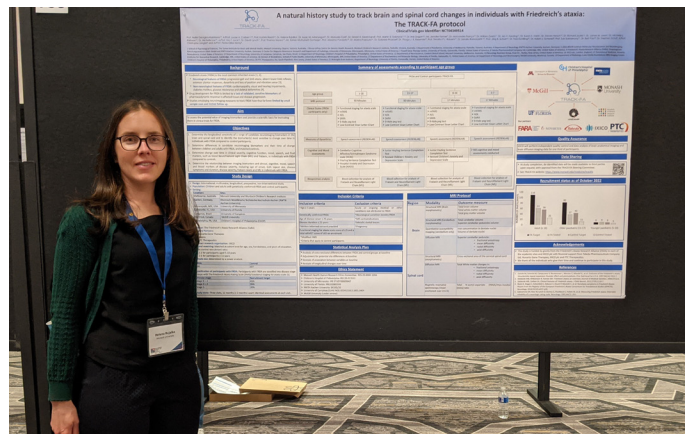
In September 2022, the TRACK-FA site in Campinas tested its first participant. We're thrilled to have Campinas on board. This important achievement will help boost TRACK-FA recruitment even further, and will provide an opportunity for individuals in Brazil to participate.



TRACK-FA-team at Campinas. Left to right: Alberto Martinez, Cynthia Silveira, Rachel Guimarães, Marcondes Franca, Fernanda Bittar, Juliana Ferreira and Thiago Rezende.

Update from Dallas, Texas

The TRACK-FA Neuroimaging- Consortium meets via videoconference every month, but in November 2022, we held our first in-person/online hybrid meeting in Dallas, Texas. It was a fantastic opportunity for many of our site principal investigators, researchers and assistants from around the world to get together in person, celebrate our achievements, and plan for the next phase of TRACK-FA! We also attended the inaugural International Congress for Ataxia Research (ICAR), where we showcased the TRACK-FA study to a global audience through a talk and a poster presentation.



Dr. Helena Bujalka (TRACK-FA Project Coordinator, Melbourne, Australia) at ICAR. Helena presented a poster at ICAR outlining the TRACK-FA study.



Prof Nellie Georgiou-Karistianis



Dr Ian Harding



A/Prof Louise Corben



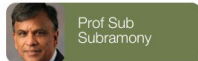
Prof Martin Delatycki



A/Prof Marcondes Franca



Dr Thiago Rezende



Prof Sub Subramony



Prof Thomas Mareci



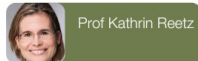
A/Prof Manuela Corti



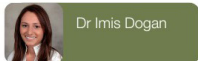
Prof Massimo Pandolfo



A/Prof David Rudko



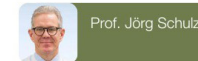
Prof Kathrin Reetz



Dr Imis Dogan



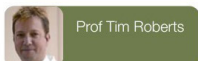
Dr Sandro Romanzetti



Prof. Jörg Schulz



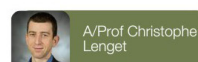
Prof William Gaetz



Prof Tim Roberts



Prof David Lynch



A/Prof Christophe Lenget



A/Prof Pierre-Gilles Henry

TRACK-FA site principal investigators



We are still recruiting

Enrolment is still open for TRACK-FA – but not for long.

Inclusion criteria (partial) FA participants:

- ☒ Genetically confirmed FA
- ☒ Age of onset ≤ 25 years
- ☒ Disease duration ≤ 25 years
- ☒ Disease stage: primarily ambulatory (with and without assistance)

Inclusion criteria control participants:

- ☒ Age ≥ 5 years
- ☒ Able to provide written informed consent

Exclusion criteria (partial) FA and control:

- ☒ Pacemaker, other metallic surgical implants, metallic braces
- ☒ Pregnancy
- ☒ Other ongoing medical conditions, including psychiatric and neurological diagnoses (speak with the site investigator)

We are recruiting control participants that match for sex, age, years of education and handedness. If you know someone that matches yourself, and is interested in participating as a control, please ask them to contact one of the researchers from your site.

For more information, you can visit the TRACK-FA website using the link below.

<https://www.monash.edu/medicine/trackfa>

If you would like to participate, and think you may meet the eligibility criteria, please get in touch with your closest site.

We thank you for your ongoing participation in this very important study and look forward to seeing you again at your next visit.

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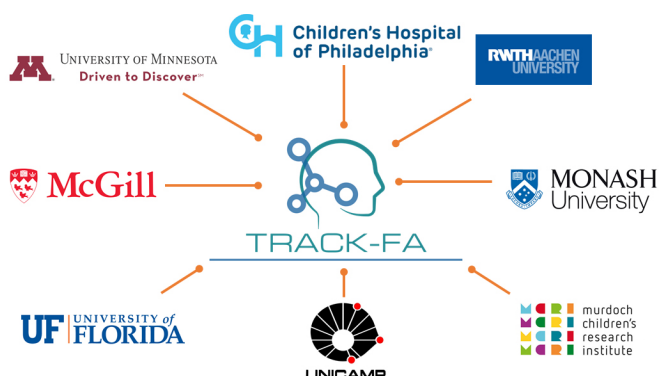
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Our partners:

