

Tim Hughes

- **Background**

I received my master's in public health in epidemiology and had worked for the CDC and NIH. I started out in toxicology and chemistry before finding the 'human' aspect of epidemiology so appealing. Epidemiology allows me to expertly design studies around so many of the research questions I have. I chose Pitt because of the reputation it had with the NIH researchers I worked with at the National Institute on Aging. Pitt is also one of the highest NIH funded universities. Finding funding for my PhD was not a problem.

- **Areas of Interest and dissertation work**

Nearly everyone fears losing their memory and alertness as they age. My area of research interest involves the vascular determinants of age-related neurodegeneration. My dissertation blends my interests in neuro-imaging with biochemical markers measured from the blood. The ultimate goal is to understand what factors lead, not just to dementia and Alzheimer's disease, but to mild cognitive decline in late-life.

- **Perspectives on the program –**

The program allows trainees to find their individual path in cardiovascular research. We follow our research in its own direction to gain expertise in our area of interest. Yet the program enables us to stay connected to other trainees. We are encouraged to work and publish with each other. The monthly journal club allows trainees to come together critique and discuss common topics from the window of our particular expertise. I learn a lot from the comments and discussions brought up at journal club. The over-arching goal is clear: the CV training program is here to enable trainees to become strong and independent researchers who are well connected in their field. The end goal is to get big grants. The focused, well connected training we receive will help us in our career to get grants and find enriching collaborations.

- **Future Plans and opportunities:**

I want to return to the NIA for a post-doctorate in neuroepidemiology. This experience will set me in the perfect position to gain the expertise I need in the recent advances in neuro-imaging and the methods of aging research. After the post-doc at NIA, I plan to get a research and teaching position at a major university.