

Protein Yields Alzheimer's Clues

Understanding a protein that builds up in the brains of Alzheimer's sufferers may yield clues as to how Alzheimer's disease works.

Although there is no consensus on the cause of Alzheimer's disease, a protein called amyloid-beta (A-beta) is thought to disrupt normal brain functions, according to a study published by the journal *Science*. In some rare forms of Alzheimer's, genetic mutations dramatically increase the production of the A-beta protein, although it's not always seen in the most common forms of Alzheimer's.

Using 24 participants, half of whom had Alzheimer's and half who didn't, scientists injected their spinal fluid—an indicator of brain conditions—with the A-beta protein. They found that those with Alzheimer's cleared the protein 30 percent slower than those without the memory-loss disease. Although this research is just a stepping stone in the quest for an Alzheimer's cure, researchers say this study has important implications for a future treatment.

[Read "A Protein's Ebb and Flow."](#)

To help educate your staff about dementia and memory care, check out the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners' Alzheimer's and Dementia Staff Education Week February 14-21 Tool Kit at NCCDP.org.

And, be sure to read the Executive Focus Group discussion on the future of memory care in the January/February 2011 issue of *Assisted Living Executive* (coming soon).

12/14/2010

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