Alzheimer’s Research: What’s New in Alzheimer’s Research?

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Latest Dementia and Alzheimer's Research News

The following are summaries related to new research on various dementia and Alzheimer’s disease studies and reports.

Proton Pump Inhibitors Do Not Cause Alzheimer’s or Dementia

A new study published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society looked at the safety of Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) and any risks they may pose for dementia, mild cognitive impairment, or Alzheimer’s disease.

Previous reports have indicated a link between PPIs – medications used to manage ulcers and reflux disease – and the increased risk of Alzheimer’s and dementia.

The researchers looked at data from the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center (NACC) database from 2005 to 2015. The information came from people who are 50 and older who had either normal brain function or mild cognitive impairment, and the researchers noted their use of PPIs.

Of the 10,000 participants:

- 73% never used PPIs
- 18% used them occasionally
- 8% were using them often

The people taking PPIs were also using medications for treating sleep disorders, incontinence, and depression. All of these medications are known to be linked to cognitive impairment.

Interestingly, there was decreased risk of cognitive decline in the patients taking PPIs and the researchers indicated further investigation was needed to explain the decline.

Research Shows Gaps in Healthcare in Alzheimer’s Patients Who Live Alone

A report in the Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease found that 46% of people with Alzheimer’s in Sweden live alone and are primarily older women.

Proposing the idea that Alzheimer's patients who are living alone may not be receiving the same adequate health care and treatment as those who live someone.

Swedish researchers studied 26,000 patients with Alzheimer’s disease and based on information from drug and patient registers, and they were able to estimate how the living alone affected health care, treatment, and independence.

The researchers also concluded that living alone with Alzheimer's affected mood and sleep and contributed to psychotic symptoms.

Study Finds Poor Diet, Along with Genes, Triggers Alzheimer's Disease

A new study out of the University of Southern California (USC) looked at mice carrying a genetic risk factor for Alzheimer's disease and found the disease developed quickly after 12 weeks on a poor diet.

The researchers from the USC Davis School of Gerontology compared the effects of a poor diet on groups of mice with the ApoE4 or ApoE3 gene – the two genetic risk factors for Alzheimer's.

What they found was in combination with an unhealthy diet, the mice with the ApoE4 gene showed more markers of inflammation in their brains whereas the ones with the ApoE3 gene did not.

What this means for people who carry the ApoE4 gene, eating a diet that is high in fats, sugars, and cholesterol can influence and trigger the development of the Alzheimer's.

Having the ApoE4 gene and making unhealthy food choices doesn't guarantee you will develop Alzheimer's, it just means that you should be aware of these risk factors.

Ask your doctor about routine screenings and make an appointment with a registered dietitian to minimize your risk of developing Alzheimer's.

New Study Finds Cognitive Tests Can Detect Alzheimer's Before Symptoms Appear

A new study reported in Neuropsychology Review finds cognitive tests can identify Alzheimer's disease in older adults before they even start to experience symptoms.

The researchers from Keck Medicine at the University of Southern California (USC) conducted a review of 61 studies to determine whether neuropsychological testing could identify Alzheimer's early in adults over 50 with normal cognition.

Researchers found was the people who had amyloid plagues performed worse on cognitive testing than those who did not have amyloid plaques. The study also found people with tau pathology and neurodegeneration were performing worse than those with amyloid plaques.

Accumulations of amyloid plaques and tau proteins in the brain are indicators of Alzheimer's disease. Both of these eventually affect the brain's ability to function normally.

The researchers feel that the study results prove a need for cognitive testing in older adults as part of routine check-ups.

Gut Bacteria Link to Alzheimer's Disease

A new report from researchers out of Lund University in Sweden finds gut bacteria may increase the development of Alzheimer's disease. This discovery opens up the potential for new opportunities in prevention and treatment.

The researchers looked at mice suffering from Alzheimer's and mice who were healthy to compare the different compositions of gut bacteria. Mice without gut bacteria appeared to have smaller amounts of amyloid plaques in the brain.

To confirm whether there was a link between the gut bacteria and Alzheimer's, researchers transferred gut bacteria from the diseased mice to ones without Alzheimer's. What they found was that the healthy mice developed more amyloid plaques in their brains.

The study is unique because it shows a direct role of gut bacteria in Alzheimer's disease and this is something researchers previously did not know.

Additionally, this means that if gut bacteria can be treated quickly, it may offer a new method of prevention towards Alzheimer’s or at the least delays the progression of the disease.