

A molecule targeting inflammation in the brain could play a role in treating Alzheimer's disease

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A molecule targeting one of the sources of inflammation in the brain could play a role in treating diseases of the brain including Alzheimer's disease and multiple sclerosis according to a study published in Nature Medicine today (Monday 16 February 2015).

Researchers at Trinity College Dublin identified the molecule MCC950 as a potential treatment for inflammation. In lab tests, the scientists explored whether the molecule could be used to target NLRP3, a protein which plays a role in the inflammatory process which is thought to contribute to diseases such as Alzheimer's. In cells derived from both mice and humans the molecule was found to inhibit the activation of NLRP3, suggesting that future research may lead to the molecule being explored as a candidate to treat conditions linked to inflammation.

Dr Doug Brown, Director of Research and Development at Alzheimer's Society, said:

'Research tells us that inflammation in the brain may contribute to the development of Alzheimer's disease, and finding ways to target and treat inflammation is a potential new avenue for treating the condition. This small study in cells has identified a molecule that can inhibit the brain's inflammatory response and could be a potential future candidate for diseases caused by inflammation, but it's too early to say whether this could lead to a future drug for dementia.'

'We still don't know enough about what causes the changes in the brain leading to Alzheimer's, and so we need more research to piece together brain degeneration, one of medicine's greatest puzzles. We're funding research into the role inflammation plays in dementia and we need to see a step change in research funding in order to help us understand the condition.'

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