

Diabetes drugs may be the best available treatment for Alzheimer's disease

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Two type 2 diabetes drugs, lixisenatide and liraglutide, can protect the brains of mice from the effects of Alzheimer's disease, finds a study published today in Neuropharmacology.

The hope is that this could bring about a transformation in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease in the very near future, as the drugs used in the studies have already been licensed for human use and are on the market.

Responding to this, Dr James Pickett, Head of Research at Alzheimer's Society, said:

'It is exciting that drugs used for type 2 diabetes have been found to be promising as potential treatments for Alzheimer's disease, and could tackle the underlying changes in the brain that are causing the disease. Alzheimer's Society funded earlier work that showed the promise of the drug liraglutide, and we are now funding a clinical trial of this drug in people with early-stage Alzheimer's disease.

'Current treatments for Alzheimer's only help with the symptoms for a short while and do not stop the disease from progressing. We believe that the concept of drug repurposing, where drugs already licensed for one condition may be beneficial for dementia, has enormous potential and could deliver new treatments faster and cheaper than producing a new drug from scratch. By speeding up the research process we hope to deliver a new dementia treatment within five to 10 years.'

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

225,000 will develop dementia this year, that's one every three minutes

Alzheimer's Society research shows that 850,000 people in the UK will have a form of dementia by 2015. In less than ten years a million people will be living with dementia. This will soar to two million people by 2051

Dementia costs the UK economy over £26 Billion per year. This is the equivalent of more than £30,000 per person with dementia.

Alzheimer's Society champions the rights of people living with dementia and the millions of people who care for them

Alzheimer's Society works in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Alzheimer's Society supports people to live well with dementia today and funds research to find a cure for tomorrow. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by calling 0845 306 0898 or visiting alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society provides a National Dementia Helpline, the number is 0300 222 11 22 or visit alzheimers.org.uk

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