High blood sugar may contribute towards Alzheimer’s disease, new study finds

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Scientists have uncovered a mechanism that links high blood sugar with Alzheimer's disease, according to a study published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation yesterday (Monday 4th May 2015).

The research was carried out in mice by researchers at Washington University School of Medicine. It showed that high levels of the sugar glucose, a symptom of diabetes, can increase the levels of a toxic protein called amyloid that is associated with Alzheimer's disease.

The results of the study suggest diabetes can have harmful effects on brain function and may exacerbate neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.

Dr Clare Walton, Research Manager at Alzheimer's Society said:

'This study in mice adds to a growing body of evidence that suggests there is a link between poorly managed diabetes and dementia.

This latest research provides a potential insight into why this link exists and indicates that keeping levels of blood glucose within the normal range may help to reduce the production of the toxic amyloid protein, a known contributor to Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's Society is currently funding a clinical trial to test whether a common diabetes drug that lowers blood glucose can also be beneficial to people with early stage Alzheimer's disease.

Whilst we don't want people living with diabetes to worry that they will develop dementia, we would advise people who are concerned to contact their GP.

The best way to reduce the risk of developing dementia is to eat a healthy balanced diet, take plenty of exercise and not smoke.'

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