

New risk factors discovered for Alzheimer's disease

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A recent study in *Journal of Neuroimaging* suggests that cognitively normal adults exhibiting atrophy of their temporal lobe or damage to blood vessels in the brain are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease. Older adults showing signs of both conditions were seven-times more likely to develop Alzheimer's than their peers.

“Alzheimer's disease, a highly debilitating and ultimately fatal neurological disease, is already associated with other risk factors such as poor cognitive scores, education or health conditions,” says study author Caterina Rosano. “This study, because it focused on healthy, cognitively normal adults, shows that there other risk factors we need to consider.”

MRI images of participants' brains were examined to identify poor brain circulation, damaged blood vessels and/or atrophy of the medial temporal lobe. Subjects showing any one or a combination of these symptoms were more likely to develop Alzheimer's in the following years.

“Similarly to heart disease, brain blood vessel damage is more likely to occur in patients with high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes,” says Rosano. “Since we know that prevention of these conditions can lower risk of heart attack and stroke, it is likely that it would also lower the risk of developing Alzheimer's.”

Source: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

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