

Fatty acids clue for Alzheimer's

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(PhysOrg.com) -- The amount of fatty acids in the brain varies between healthy people and those with Alzheimer's according to new research from the University of Bristol, UK, supported by the Alzheimer's Research Trust.

The findings, published today in the journal *Neurochemical Research*, will help researchers understand what is happening in the [brain](#) during the disease.

Seth Love, Professor of [Neuropathology](#) at the University of Bristol, who led the work, said: “Fatty acids are essential to the way our brains

work; they affect the way nerve cells function and help insulate the electrical signals that transmit information around our brains. When we compared the brains of people without Alzheimer's to those with the disease, we found a reduction in two types of fatty acid, and an increase in two others.

“It might be that the changes in amounts of fatty acids contribute to the development of [Alzheimer's disease](#), or are a consequence. We need to do more research to find out.”

Rebecca Wood, Chief Executive of the Alzheimer's Research Trust, said: “Dementia research in Bristol is making fantastic progress. It is vital that we understand the changes in the brain that cause Alzheimer's so that we can open the door to new treatments and ways to prevent the disease.

“We don't know if taking fatty acid supplements or altering our diets could have any effect on Alzheimer's risk, but this new research is helping us to understand how [fatty acids](#) might be involved in the disease.

“Over 4,300 people in Bristol have [dementia](#), a number forecast to rise as the population ages. We must invest in research now to find ways to prevent, treat or cure this devastating disease.”

More information: 'Fatty acid composition of frontal, temporal and parietal [neocortex](#) in the normal human brain and Alzheimer's disease' by Fraser et al is published in [Neurochemical Research](#) on 12 November 2009.

Provided by University of Bristol ([news](#) : [web](#))

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