

Mice infected with *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite show Alzheimer's improvements

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The parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* has some favorable effects on the pathogenesis and progression of a mouse model of Alzheimer's disease, reports a Mar. 21 study in the open access journal *PLoS ONE*.

Toxoplasma gondii, a parasite commonly hosted in cats and generally known for the potential complications it can cause for human pregnancies, suppressed the immune system.

The researchers behind today's study, led by Eun-Hee Shin of the Seoul National University College of Medicine, found that this immune system suppression had positive effects on Alzheimer's disease mouse models, resulting in a significant decrease in the amount of b-amyloid plaque deposition, a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease, and better performance in behavior tests like a water maze.

More information: Jung B-K, Pyo K-H, Shin KY, Hwang YS, Lim H, et al. (2012) *Toxoplasma gondii* Infection in the Brain Inhibits Neuronal Degeneration and Learning and Memory Impairments in a Murine Model of Alzheimer's Disease. *PLoS ONE* 7(3): e33312.

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