

# Spice ingredient in curry emerges as promising basis for an Alzheimer's disease medicine

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The spice compound that gives curry dishes their yellow color and pungent flavor is emerging as a prime candidate for a less expensive treatment for Alzheimer's disease (AD), according to an article in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News*. *C&EN* is the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

Lauren K. Wolf, *C&EN* associate editor, explains that pharmaceutical companies have invested heavily in developing new drugs for AD. More than 5 million people in the U.S. alone already have that memory-robbing disease. Projections suggest that the number will rise to 16 million by 2050. New medications are in the pipeline, but the most advanced candidates, made of monoclonal antibodies, are expensive to produce and may cost tens of thousands of dollars annually to treat each patient.

As a result, scientists are seeking less-pricey alternatives, such as substances that can be extracted in abundant amounts from plant compounds. One of the most promising is curcumin, a spice compound extracted from the rootstalks of the turmeric plant. The article details scientific evidence about curcumin's potential and the hurdles that chemists must overcome to craft it into a drug. For instance, only tiny amounts of powdered curcumin taken by mouth get into the blood, let alone the brain.

**More information:** "Spicing Up Alzheimer's Therapy"  
[cen.acs.org//articles/90/i31/T ... -Curcumin-Treat.html](http://cen.acs.org//articles/90/i31/T...-Curcumin-Treat.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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