

Major human drug trial underway for Alzheimer's

May 23 2013



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

A potentially ground-breaking human drug trial is currently underway, which aims to discover whether blood pressure medication can slow or halt the progression of Alzheimer's Disease (AD). This is the latest in EU-funded studies, which are being made public to highlight the European Month of the Brain.

This major 18-month study is NILVAD ('Nilvadipine in Alzheimer's Disease'), which has funding of EUR 6 million from the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Leading this five-year project to an international level is Professor Brian Lawlor, from Trinity College Dublin. His research interests are in the early detection, diagnosis and treatment of AD, as well as the [neurobiology](#) and treatment of behavioural and [psychological symptoms](#) in dementia and [mental disorders](#).

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, which causes problems with memory, thinking and behaviour. Although there are around 100 different types of dementia, AD is the most common form, affecting 62 % of those living with dementia. The disease affects more than 15 million individuals worldwide and around 5 million [Europeans](#). As a result it remains one of the most costly diseases in society, which amounts to more than EUR 440 000 million each year.

The rise in numbers is attributed to advances in public health and medical care that enables people to live much longer than they used to. While one in 25 people aged 70 to 79 has a form of [dementia](#), this rises to one in six people over the age of 80.

However, Professor Lawlor is hopeful that collaborating with Alzheimer's experts from ten countries will prove successful, given the fact that [new drugs](#) for the disease have not come to fruition since 2002. This, despite many promising lines of research which have come to nothing.

However, the NILVAD project, has so far, shown more than just promise. The drug, nilvadipine, is already approved for human use in [cardiovascular disease](#), and a pilot trial has demonstrated that the drug could be safe in the treatment of AD.

Professor Lawlor says, 'We are trying to see if it alters the rate of progression of the disease. Animal trials gave promising results and the earlier pilot trial did give an efficacy signal as well.'

The trial will consist of male and female patients with mild to moderate AD aged between 50 and 90. It is hoped, that if this trial is successful, nilvadipine could represent an advance in the treatment of AD patients. Most importantly it would have a major impact on the health and social care costs incurred in Europe by this neurodegenerative disorder.

More information: NILVAD www.nilvad.eu/

Provided by CORDIS

Citation: Major human drug trial underway for Alzheimer's (2013, May 23) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-05-major-human-drug-trial-underway.html>

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