

New Alzheimer's drug to enter clinical trials

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A new drug developed at Lancaster University in the UK that may help to prevent the early stages of Alzheimer's disease is to enter clinical trials.

The number of people with dementia is steadily increasing. Currently

there are about 850,000 cases in the UK, with numbers expected to reach over a million by 2021. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. It begins when a protein called beta-amyloid forms [senile plaques](#) that start to clump together in the brain, damaging nerve cells and leading to [memory loss](#) and confusion.

David Allsop, Professor of Neuroscience, and Dr Mark Taylor, from the Faculty of Health and Medicine, have developed a new [drug](#) which in laboratory tests reduces the number of these senile plaques and the amount of brain inflammation and oxidative damage associated with Alzheimer's disease.

Lancaster University has filed a patent application for the drug, and it will be progressing into [clinical trials](#) run by the research company MAC Clinical Research. If it passes regulatory hurdles, the ultimate aim is to give the drug to people with mild symptoms of memory loss.

Professor Allsop said: "It is encouraging that our drug is being taken forward and will be tested on humans.

"Many people who are mildly forgetful may go on to develop the disease because senile plaques start forming years before any symptoms manifest themselves. The ultimate aim is to give the drug at that stage, to stop any more damage to the brain."

Professor Allsop was the first scientist to isolate senile plaques from the human brain.

Dr Steve Higham, Chief Operating Officer of MAC Clinical Research said: "Preventing Alzheimer's disease progression remains a critical unmet need for millions of people worldwide. With that in mind we are very pleased to begin this exciting partnership with Professor David Allsop, his team and Lancaster University."

Dr James Pickett, Head of Research at Alzheimer's Society which currently funds the research, said: "There's a tremendous need for new treatments that can stop the development of dementia in its tracks. Trials in people are an essential step in the development of any new drug so it's really positive to see this promising research being taken forward.

"Alzheimer's Society will continue to fund drug development research like this to ensure the best new treatments reach the people who desperately need them as soon as possible."

Other contributing researchers include groups led by Lancaster University's Professor Christian Hölscher (formerly of Ulster University) and Professor Massimo Masserini at University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy.

Lancaster University launched the "Defying Dementia" campaign earlier this year, in order to raise awareness of Alzheimer's and the new drug, and to raise funds for further research.

Provided by Lancaster University

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