

# Alzheimer's proteins in ICU survivors

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While modern medicine has increased the number of people who survive a stay in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), survivors have a high risk of developing problems with thinking and memory, a phenomenon called cognitive impairment.

Cognitive impairment is also one of the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease.

James Jackson, PsyD, and colleagues used PET imaging in 14 ICU survivors to look for a malfunctioning protein common in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease—beta-amyloid.

The researchers were the first to image beta-amyloid in this patient population. They also followed the patients with comprehensive cognitive testing for six years after their hospital stay.

The investigators reported in the *Journal of Critical Care* that only two of the patients had measurable beta-amyloid in their brains, suggesting that beta-amyloid may not be the mechanism that underlies dementia in ICU survivors.

The study paves the way for future studies to uncover the mechanisms of [cognitive problems](#) among survivors of critical illnesses.

**More information:** James C. Jackson et al. Florbetapir-PET  $\beta$ -amyloid imaging and associated neuropsychological trajectories in survivors of critical illness: A case series, *Journal of Critical Care*

(2017). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jcrc.2017.10.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrc.2017.10.016)

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