

Vascular dementia trial of Viagra-type drug nears closing stages

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Credit: St. George's University of London

The Phase 2 trial (named PASTIS) is examining whether tadalafil – a Viagra-like drug that treats erectile dysfunction – can increase blood flow to the deep vessels within the brain.

Vascular [dementia](#) is the second most prevalent cause of dementia, after Alzheimer's disease. Increasingly it is clear that changes to blood vessels within the brain could worsen dementia and speed cognitive decline.

The trial at St George's is being led by a Neuroscientist Dr. Atticus Hainsworth and funded by the Alzheimer's Society and a US charity, the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation. Consultant Neurologist Dr. Jeremy Isaacs of St George's Hospital is the clinical principal investigator.

The researchers recruited 55 older people with symptomatic small vessel disease. Over the course of two visits they were given either a tadalafil pill or a placebo. They had an MRI scan both before, and 3-5 hours after the dose was given.

Dr. Hainsworth explained: "All patients have now been scanned and we are analyzing the scans. After that we will unlock the trial and find out whether the drug did increase brain [blood flow](#). While the exposure was very brief, we hope it will give us a clear picture of the difference the [drug](#) made, and allow us to build on this in future trials."

Dr. Hainsworth is also the lead of the Vascular Experimental Medicine group within Dementias Platform UK, a public-private partnership created by the Medical Research Council (MRC) to facilitate the discovery of new ways to understand, diagnose, and treat dementia.

He commented: "This links all the different dementia groups and researchers in the UK and is essential to ensure that we are all working together to make progress against this group of disorders, which affects 850,000 people in the UK."

Provided by St. George's University of London

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