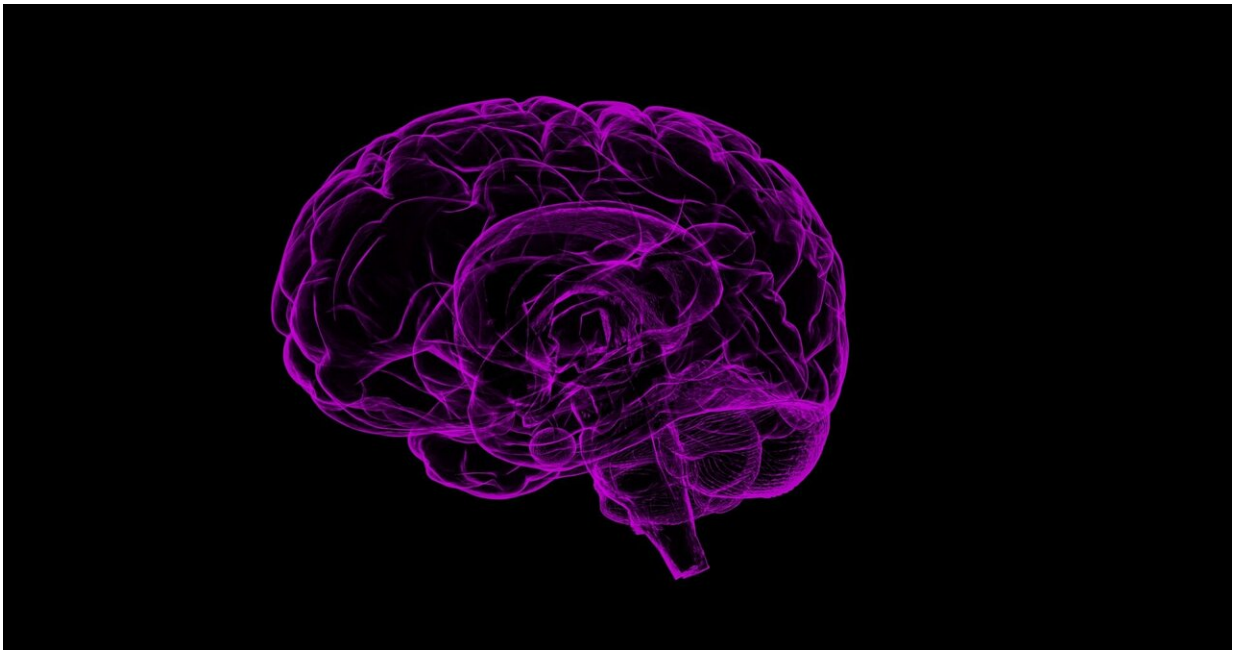


Understanding how people respond to symptoms of a brain tumor

March 22 2019



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A recent study from King's College London and Cambridge University highlighted that people may experience multiple subtle changes before being diagnosed with a brain tumour.

The study focused on these changes as missed opportunities to diagnose [brain tumours](#) earlier, and how increased awareness of these changes could lead to more rapid investigation and referral.

Following on from that study, Dr. Suzanne Scott from King's College London has published a paper in *PLOS ONE* which focuses on what [patients](#) and their families thought about those changes and how they decided to seek medical help—often on more than one occasion.

"We have previously highlighted that people may experience multiple subtle changes before being diagnosed with a [brain](#) tumour", explains Dr. Scott, Senior Lecturer in Health Psychology. "For instance, changes in sleep, memory, speaking, concentration, and balance, sensations, and senses or feeling 'not me'."

"In this new study we found that patients often didn't consider seeking help for many of the changes as they were mild, infrequent, intermittent, and didn't interfere with what they needed to do. We often believe that symptoms need to be severe, constant and interfering to mean they are something serious and worth going to the doctor for. To encourage more timely diagnosis of brain [tumour](#) this belief may need to be addressed."

The study showed that patients often thought the changes were normal or due to age, stress, tiredness and nothing to worry about. Some patients had thought it would be silly to go the doctor with such seemingly minor issues and did not want to waste the GP's time, especially if there were more pressing things to do. Revisiting to the doctor was also found to be tricky if patients had received reassurance that it was nothing to worry about at their first visit.

Provided by King's College London

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