Potential diagnostic test for Alzheimer's would use cerebrospinal fluid

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Researchers at the University of Kentucky are working on a potential diagnostic test for Alzheimer's disease, based on biomarkers in cerebrospinal fluid.

Scout Diagnostics, a company targeting early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, recently received matching funds of $435,600 to support developing a laboratory test to detect and confirm Alzheimer's disease in its earliest stages. Scout was formed in 2006 by University of Kentucky chemistry professors and Sanders-Brown Center on Aging researchers Mark Lovell and Bert Lynn, along with CEO John Beran.

Lovell and Lynn have been working for some time with biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease. They have identified specific markers for Alzheimer's in cerebrospinal fluid. The potential exists for researchers to develop a diagnostic test for early Alzheimer's using analysis of spinal fluid samples. This would be a significant development, as existing treatments for Alzheimer's disease are most effective if started extremely early in the progression of the disease - often before clinical signs of cognitive impairment are apparent.

The UK Sanders-Brown Center on Aging also maintains a large cohort of research volunteers, many of whom have donated cerebrospinal fluid for research on the diagnostic test.

"We were very pleased to hear of this award for the cutting-edge research that Dr. Lovell and his team at Scout Diagnostics are doing. A reliable biomarker for Alzheimer's disease is desperately needed to identify individuals very early in the disease process, so that therapeutic interventions can begin when they may be most effective, before memory problems develop," said Linda Van Eldik, director of the Sanders-Brown Center on Aging.

Provided by University of Kentucky