

New drug treatment could offer stroke survivors better outcomes

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Promising results for a new drug treatment for ischaemic stroke patients have been published today in the journal *Lancet Neurology*.

A new drug treatment, Tenecteplase, has been shown to have similar outcomes in limiting the damage done in the [brain](#) after a [stroke](#) compared with current treatments. Crucially however, it is also far easier to administer and may also be safer.

Ischaemic strokes are caused by a blood clot blocking a blood vessel in the brain, and are treated by injecting 'clot-busting' drugs that dissolve the blood clot, restoring blood flow. There is a crucial four and a half hour window after an ischaemic stroke in which giving clot-busting [drug treatment](#) is effective in limiting damage and improving outcome.

Currently, only one drug – Alteplase – is used for acute treatment of stroke. The study, led by Professor Keith Muir, SINAPSE Chair of Clinical Imaging and Consultant Neurologist at the University of Glasgow, compared Alteplase with a newer clot-busting drug called Tenecteplase.

The study, funded by the Stroke Association, showed that incidences of serious adverse events did not differ between the two groups and all neurological and radiological outcomes were similar, despite by chance there being slightly more very severe strokes in the Tenecteplase group. The results also revealed that potentially fewer people had a brain haemorrhage as a complication of treatment with Tenecteplase.

Researchers believe that, as Tenecteplase can be given more easily than Alteplase, it could become a less expensive and easier to administer treatment for ischaemic stroke patients; a larger clinical trial will be needed in the to test Tenecteplase fully, and plans for such a trial are at an advanced stage.

Professor Muir said: "Every minute is crucial in treating stroke and we need better treatment options. Any treatment that is easier to deliver and potentially safer could mean the difference between a good recovery and someone suffering seriously debilitating long term effects.

"We are planning a larger scale trial to investigate these results further."

Dr Dale Webb, Director of Research and Information at the Stroke Association, said: "The brain damage caused by a stroke can leave people facing a devastating level of disability. Currently, our only tool to treat ischaemic stroke, caused by a blockage of an artery in the brain, is thrombolysis. This type of treatment benefits around one in seven people treated. There is only one drug licensed for thrombolysis, which is Alteplase.

"This important research investigating an alternative to Alteplase could pave the way for an improvement in thrombolysis. A more effective way to deliver clot-busting treatment to [stroke patients](#) could be life-changing; when stroke strikes, time saved is brain saved."

Provided by University of Glasgow

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