Scientists shed light on processes behind age-related decline in brain structures important for memory
31 January 2019, by Julia Short

"Using a method called mediation analysis, we discovered that ageing of the white matter was accounting for ageing of hippocampal grey matter and not the other way around. Our results suggest that damage to the support cells may affect tissue health in the hippocampus, a region important for memory and involved in Alzheimer’s disease.

"This is an exciting find. If hard-working support cells in the white matter start to misfunction with age, then therapies that protect these support cells may aid in the fight against the damage that ageing can do to our cognitive ability."

The study, which looked at the brains of 166 healthy volunteers, was carried out using state-of-the-art brain imaging techniques at CUBRIC and was jointly funded by the Alzheimer’s Society and the BRACE Alzheimer's charity.

The research "Fornix white matter glia damage causes hippocampal gray matter damage during age-dependent limbic decline" is published in Scientific Reports.


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