

Alzheimer's not contagious, despite slew of headlines

[The headlines tossed across the front pages of British newspapers](#) certainly sound shocking: "You can catch Alzheimer's" the front page of the Daily Mirror screamed. "Alzheimer's disease may be infectious," The Independent wrote. The Daily Mail said "Alzheimer's link to blood transfusions."

The problem? They're wrong.

"The headlines were a bit of a shock," said Simon Mead, a researcher at the Institute of Neurology at the University College London. His study, published in Nature, inspired those front-page shockers, published beside news of Queen Elizabeth becoming the longest-serving British monarch.

"The poor queen," Mead said.

In fact, the study contradicts much of what's in those "bombshell" headlines. In the study, the authors conclude that there is "no suggestion that Alzheimer's disease is a contagious disease and no supportive evidence from epidemiological studies that Alzheimer's disease is transmissible, notably by blood transfusions." The scientists called for more research on a phenomenon they discovered among a tiny number of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease patients who had once been treated with the same human growth hormone.

In the paper, researchers wrote that four of the eight patients autopsied showed the presence of an abnormal protein that is also found in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. It might suggest that in this one unusual circumstance, an element of Alzheimer's — an element, not Alzheimer's itself — could have been transmitted from human to human. The authors conclude it needs more research.

Read full, original post: [No, Alzheimer's is not contagious](#)