

Your mind may stay nimble even with signs of Alzheimer's in your brain

The defective proteins that are widely thought to kill brain neurons and cause, or at least indicate, [Alzheimer's disease](#) do not always have that calamitous result, scientists reported on [Nov. 14], raising more doubts about conventional approaches to diagnosing and [finding treatments](#) for Alzheimer's.

The researchers analyzed the brains of eight people who died in their 90's and who had excellent recall until then. Three of the eight brains had the defining amyloid plaques and tau tangles of Alzheimer's, yet somehow were "immune to [their] effects," said neurologist Changiz Geula, of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine....

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Two main explanations for "Alzheimer's brains" that don't develop Alzheimer's are emerging.

One, known as cognitive reserve, holds that if people are well-educated and intellectually engaged throughout life, they won't show the memory and cognitive impairments that otherwise come with the loss of synapses and death of neurons in the brain's memory and thinking regions.

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The other possibility is even more intriguing. Perhaps biochemical or genetic mechanisms prevent cognitive decline even when the brain is riddled with pathological amyloid and tau.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Their brains had the telltale signs of Alzheimer's. So why did they still have nimble minds?](#)