

Does gum disease causes Alzheimer's? We are a long way from an answer, researcher says

Do you floss regularly? A study published January 23 in Science Advances — and the news stories that it inspired — might have scared you into better oral hygiene by [claiming to find a link between gum bacteria and Alzheimer's disease](#).

Those experiments hinted that the gum disease—causing bacteria Porphyromonas gingivalis was present in the brains of a small number of people who died with the degenerative brain disease.

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[T]he Science Advances study is far from conclusive, cautions Rudolph Tanzi, an Alzheimer's researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Science News asked him what the study can, and can't, answer about Alzheimer's disease. ...

Do we now know what causes Alzheimer's disease?

No. "It would be a complete fantasy to say that now we've solved Alzheimer's based on this," Tanzi says. "People need to know that this was a small study.... It's way too early to say that this result is valid. ... ."

...

Should we still floss our teeth?

"You really should, just for the sake of your breath," Tanzi says. "It's just courtesy. But to say that you're going to get Alzheimer's because you don't floss your teeth, people should not be thinking that."

**Read full, original post:** [No, we don't know that gum disease causes Alzheimer's](#)