

Alzheimer's trial seeks to harness the body's immune system

Scientists in academic and corporate labs are already pursuing a host of new approaches that they hope will offer pathways out of the Alzheimer's doldrums. One idea gaining traction takes a page from the oncology playbook, where drugs that enlist the power of the immune system to attack tumors are transforming cancer treatment and drug discovery.

Alector, a Silicon Valley startup founded six years ago, already has two Alzheimer's drugs in early human studies designed to strengthen the ability of the brain's immune system to fight the disease. One of the drugs targets a gene called TREM2 and the other a gene known as SIGLEC3; certain mutations in these genes can contribute to conditions that allow Alzheimer's to develop. In May, Alector treated its first person with Alzheimer's with its drug targeting TREM2, and has begun human testing for the drug that targets SIGLEC3 as well.

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There is no assurance that Alector's approach will break the losing streak. "It's exciting that this company has decided to invest in these clinical trials," [neuroimmunologist Philip] De Jager says, "but we really don't know when and how the immune system is involved in the disease."

Read full, original post: [The Future of Alzheimer's Treatment May Be Enlisting the Immune System](#)