

Feel foggy when sick? Mental sluggishness linked to inflammation

Researchers at the University of Birmingham's Centre for Human Brain Health in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam say they have uncovered a possible explanation for the mental sluggishness that often accompanies illness. The team investigated the link between "mental fog" and inflammation, the body's response to illness. In a study ("[Selective effects of acute low-grade inflammation on human visual attention](#)") published in *Neuroimage*, they showed that inflammation appears to have a particularly negative impact on the [brain's](#) readiness to reach and maintain an alert state.

...

The study focused specifically on an area of the brain which is responsible for visual attention. A group of 20 young male volunteers took part and received a salmonella typhoid vaccine that causes temporary inflammation but has few other side effects. They were tested for cognitive responses to simple images on a computer screen a few hours after the injection.

...

The results showed that inflammation specifically affected brain activity related to staying alert, while the other attention processes appeared unaffected by inflammation.

"These results show quite clearly that there's a very specific part of the brain network that's affected by inflammation," noted [researcher Ali] Mazaheri.

Read full, original post: [Link Found between Inflammation and Mental Sluggishness](#)