

Protein tangles may help predict where and how Alzheimer's will strike the brain

Tangles of a protein found inside the brain cells of people with Alzheimer's disease can be used to predict future brain shrinkage, research suggests.

In healthy people, a protein called tau is important in supporting the internal structure of [brain](#) cells. However, in those with Alzheimer's, chemical changes take place that cause the protein to form tangles that disrupt the cells. Such tangles have previously been linked to a loss of brain cells.

Now scientists have used imaging techniques to track the extent of tau tangles in the brains of those with early signs of Alzheimer's, revealing that levels of the protein predict not only how much brain shrinkage will subsequently occur, but where.

...

"This relatively small study adds to evidence that tau may drive the death of brain cells, and could explain why symptoms get worse as tau spreads through the brain," said [Laura Phipps of Alzheimer's Research UK]. "While the majority of volunteers in the study were under the age of 65, making it harder to generalise the findings to everyone with the disease, the study highlights the importance of focusing future research efforts on the tau protein."

Read full, original post: [Protein tangles in Alzheimer's patients could help predict brain shrinkage](#)