

Alzheimer's research is at a dead end. Here are 5 unexplored treatment routes

It is time to go back to basics. I have been a scientist involved in Alzheimer's research for three decades, part of large projects investigating families with a high risk of Alzheimer's, prevention strategies and the physiology of damage to [brain cells](#) that is part of the illness. I and my colleagues, who work across many scientific and medical disciplines, believe that we need to reexamine the fundamental physiology and biology of Alzheimer's, as well as reassess the contents of databases and our lab refrigerators for clues that we may have overlooked.

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There are at least five potentially fruitful and timely research directions—areas based on important discoveries made in the past several years—that can extend our knowledge, and I believe that they are quite likely to yield insights needed to find effective treatments. These areas range from malfunctions in the way brain cells get rid of problem proteins, to damage caused by inflammation, to trouble with the ways that cells send electrical signals to one another. These are different domains, but in a person they overlap to create illness in the brain, and individually or in tandem they may lie behind the terrible damage done by Alzheimer's.

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