

## Erectile dysfunction drug Viagra may help prevent brain aging

Viagra can be a wonder drug for men with erectile dysfunction, helping them maintain their sex lives as they age. Now new research suggests the little blue pill may also be beneficial to aging brains.

The findings are based on a [massive study of nearly 270,000 middle-aged men in Britain](#).

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During the study, 1,119 men in the cohort were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

The researchers noticed a distinctive pattern. The men who were prescribed Viagra or a similar drug had an 18 percent lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, compared with men who weren't given the medication.

The researchers also found an even larger difference in men who appeared to use Viagra more often. Among the highest users, based on total prescriptions, the risk of being diagnosed with Alzheimer's was 44 percent lower.

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The drugs work by dilating blood vessels and increasing blood flow throughout the body, including to the penis. Since its discovery as an erectile dysfunction treatment, sildenafil also has been used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension for both men and women.

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"There is an idea that if we can help with improving blood flow in the brain, maybe we can also reduce the risk for Alzheimer's disease," said [Sevil Yasar](#), an associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University and the co-author of an [editorial](#) that accompanied the study in Neurology.

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