

# Gene variant linked to aggressive Alzheimer's disease

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An international team of [Alzheimer's disease](#) experts declared in the open-access journal PLoS Genetics they have discovered a gene variant that is associated with the aggressiveness of Alzheimer's disease, a common form of dementia.

The researchers said the genetic marker may be used to predict the rate at which the disease will progress. Additionally, the gene may serve as a target to develop drugs that curb the progression of dementia like Alzheimer's disease.

Recent studies have found Alzheimer's disease was linked with the presence of a particular form of the tau protein (ptau) in cerebrospinal fluid.

Carlos Cruchaga, PhD, lead author at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and colleagues looked at single DNA variations in 846 patients and found the gene variant, linked to elevated ptau levels, was associated with with rapid progression of Alzheimer's disease.

"We have looked at data from three separate, international studies, and in all three, we found the same association. So we are confident that it is real and that this gene variant is associated with progression in Alzheimer's disease," Cruchaga said in a press release.

A patent application has been filed to protect the discovery that may eventually lead to development of drugs for treating dementia like Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of [dementia](#), affects an estimated 4.5 million men and women in the United States. People with this neurodegenerative disorder are not able to lead a normal life. There is no cure for the disease.

The potential risk factors for Alzheimer's disease include concussions, obesity, vitamin D deficiency, fatty diet, diabetes mellitus (type 2), high [blood sugar](#), Aluminum sulfate, and diet high in methionine.

What may help reduce the risk of the form of dementia include green tea, curry, caloric restriction, grape seed extract, red wine compound resveratrol, Mediterranean diet, [vitamin E](#), apple juice, dietary polyphenols, plant-based diet, and eating garlic.

By David Liu

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