

Using herpes drugs to slow down Alzheimer's disease could become reality

December 13 2016

The first clinical study to investigate if herpes virus drugs can have an effect on fundamental Alzheimer's disease processes has been launched at Umeå University in Sweden. The research group has previously demonstrated a correlation between herpes virus infection and an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Umeå University researchers, led by Hugo Lövheim at the Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation and the Unit of Geriatric Medicine, have launched a clinical study investigating the effect of herpes drugs on Alzheimer's disease. For four weeks, 36 people with Alzheimer's disease will be receiving treatment with Valaciclovir, a drug which specifically targets active [herpes virus](#). Several investigations will be made before and after the treatment to measure the effects on fundamental Alzheimer's disease processes. Moreover, the participants will be examined with brain imaging, which together with a tracer substance accumulating in cells with active [herpes virus infection](#) could potentially detect herpes virus infection in brain cells in people with Alzheimer's disease.

"I'm very excited about this study. In earlier population-based studies, we have seen that herpes [virus infection](#) increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease. It is very interesting to see if we can influence the neurodegenerative processes of Alzheimer's disease by using a well-established treatment of herpes," says Hugo Lövheim, lead researcher of the study and physician at the Geriatric Centre at the University Hospital of Umeå.

The study, named VALZ-Pilot, has been approved by the Medical Products Agency Sweden and the Regional Ethical Review Board in Umeå. The recruitment of study participants will be initiated in December 2016.

More information: Hugo Lövheim et al. Reactivated herpes simplex infection increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease, *Alzheimer's & Dementia* (2015). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jalz.2014.04.522](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jalz.2014.04.522)

Hugo Lövheim et al. Herpes simplex infection and the risk of Alzheimer's disease: A nested case-control study, *Alzheimer's & Dementia* (2015). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jalz.2014.07.157](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jalz.2014.07.157)

Provided by Umea University

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