Make a number larger by moving 1 stick
CAN YOU SOLVE THIS?
Only people with a sharp memory can find the second answer.



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Actinogen’s Daily Cortisol Pill Shows Mixed Alzheimer’s Results

Actinogen’s experimental daily pill showed no statistically significant benefit across an Alzheimer’s trial of 247 patients. A subgroup older than 75 showed a 30% slowing in disease progression. The Australian biotech company plans a larger trial involving 700 patients.

By **Alistair Sterling** November 19, 2026 WIB · 2 min read

Actinogen’s Daily Cortisol Pill Shows Mixed Alzheimer’s Results

Australian biotech company Actinogen’s daily pill to block cortisol showed mixed results in a 36- lzheimer’s trial involving 247

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The full trial group showed no statistically significant benefit. Patients older than 75, who represented half the group, experienced a 30% slowing in disease progression by the trial's end.

The experimental drug, emestedastat, is being developed under the brand name Xanamem. It aims to block cortisol production in brain areas linked to Alzheimer's progression.

OLDER PATIENTS SHOWED A BENEFIT

Participants had mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. They took either a daily 10mg dose or a placebo, a treatment with no active drug.

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The trial was double-blind, meaning participants and researchers did not know who received the drug during the study. The median age was 75.

Actinogen CEO Dr Steven Gourlay said the lack of a similar benefit in younger patients was disappointing. He said older patients also have higher markers of inflammation.

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"Our drug probably is having an effect of lowering inflammation in the brain," Gourlay said.

He compared the older group's results with recently approved antibody treatments, which he said reduce progression by between 22% and 27%.

Gourlay said a low-dose tablet would cost significantly less and have fewer side effects than current therapies.

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Professor Michael Woodward, honorary medical adviser for Dementia Australia, said mixed results were typical in dementia drug trials. He said the findings could help shape the next phase of testing.

A DIFFERENT TARGET FOR TREATMENT

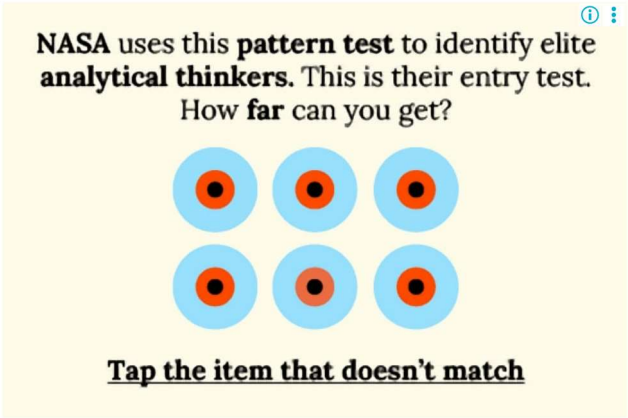
Cortisol is a stress hormone. Its production is normal and necessary, though researchers hypothesize that persistently high levels can become toxic to brain cells.

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Research has linked high cortisol levels to cognitive decline. Prolonged elevated cortisol has also been associated with the development of amyloid beta plaques in the brain.

Other Alzheimer's treatments target those plaques. The antibody drugs donanemab and lecanemab work by reducing their buildup.



Other drugs in development target tau, abnormal protein clumps that build up in brain cells and disrupt signaling and cell transport. Researchers debate whether amyloid beta or tau is the main driver of Alzheimer's.

NEXT TRIAL PLANNED FOR 700 PATIENTS

Actinogen expects its next trial to involve 700 patients. The company hopes to bring the drug to market in 2030.

The drops use mRNA technology and bypass the blood-brain barrier, an obstacle to many drugs entering the brain. Study author Professor Greg Neely said human trials are the next step.

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