Early Signs of Alzheimer's Found in Folks as Young as 20

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Think you're too young to worry about memory decline? Don't let this slip your mind: New findings show accumulations of amyloid protein, a substance that is believed to be a major warning sign of Alzheimer's, in the brains of young adults, according to a recent study from Northwestern University, reports Yahoo Health.

For the study, researchers at the university's Feinberg School of Medicine studied the brains of 13 "normal" young people, ages 20 to 66; 16 older people without dementia, ages 70 to 99; and 21 people with Alzheimer's, ages 60 to 95.

Scientists found amyloid and clumps of the substance, which are linked to an increased risk of cognitive decline, in the brain nerve cells of younger people as well as among both groups of the older participants. But clumping occurred more among the older study participants.

"We have known for a while that if we want effective therapy for Alzheimer's, we have to start early. What these findings suggest is the earlier the better," said lead researcher Changiz Guela, PhD, at Northwestern's Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease Center.

Scientists noted this is the first time that Alzheimer's–related brain changes have been found in human brains so young.

Besides amyloid accumulation, there are a lot more factors that determine whether a person will develop Alzheimer's later in life. For some tips on how to help prevent memory decline at any age, click here.

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