

Sometimes the brain outsmarts Alzheimer's



Ever wash your hair and not use a cream rinse, only to find a bunch of knotted hair tangles, that you patiently have to comb out?

Well think of something similar to that happening in the brains of those with Alzheimer's. It's only after death, that researchers are able to confirm that a brain is indeed an Alzheimer's brain. Examination will indicate **tangled neuron masses, thick plaque and floating clumps of protein debris.**

It seems that these physical characteristics are a plausible explanation for the decline and eventual incapacitation of Alzheimer's patients.

However, it seems that sometimes the brain outsmarts the Alzheimer's symptoms.

Researchers have been confounded by examining brains that have Alzheimer's characteristics but the individuals prior to their death did not exhibit any Alzheimer's behavior.

According to Dr. Juan Troncoso, at theBrainResourceCenter, JohnHopkinsUniversity, **sometimes the brain creates a resistance** to the protein -amyloid- toxicity causing the tangles, plaque and clumping.

Three of the resistance qualities identified by Dr, Samuel Grandy, of Mount Sinai Hospital, New York are

1. larger hippocampus (area of memory, spatial orientation, navigation, and emotion)

2. larger brain cells (may be able to compensate for the damaged area)
3. other brain areas take over for the damaged, localized area

This is an exciting discovery that may help to forestall the effects of Alzheimer's while research continues to find more effective treatments.

This series on dementia and Alzheimer's will **continue to look at some of the things that can help to maintain good brain health and contribute to increasing Alzheimer's resistance.**