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Monthly news summary

September 2026

Research highlights



**Alzheimer's Disease
International**
The global voice of dementia

World Alzheimer Report 2026

A new era in dementia clinical trials

Alzheimer's Disease International report 2026

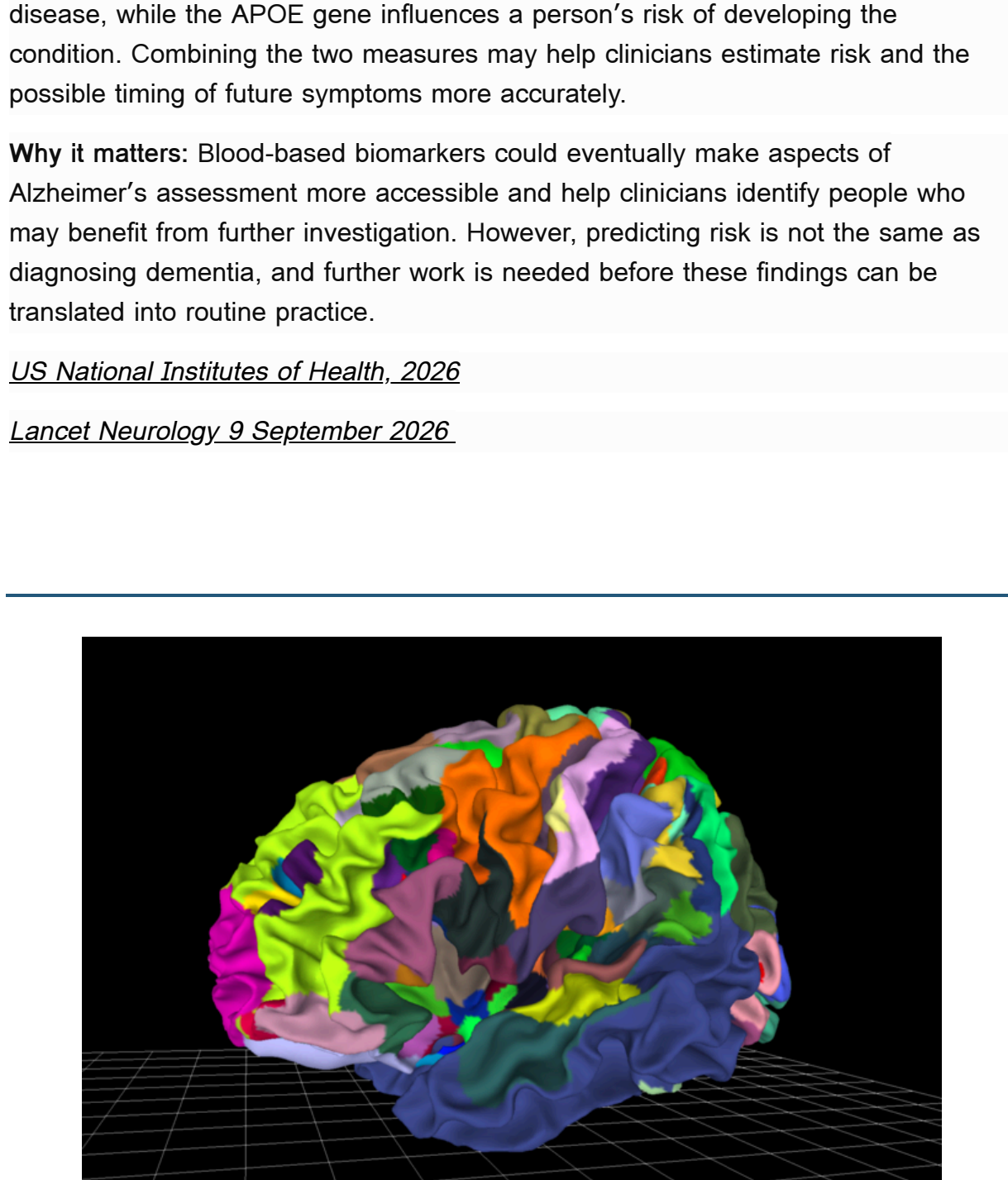
The report focuses in on the new era of dementia clinical trials, bringing with it new opportunities alongside important questions about how we make research more inclusive, accessible and effective to enable emerging and future innovation for dementia treatments.

This report explores key issues including recruitment participation and retention, the importance of global representation, diversification and their impact on inclusive dementia research, and the need to increase awareness and understanding of clinical trials among medical practitioners. The report also explores what clinical trials are and how they work, while sharing personal perspectives and experiences from people involved in clinical research.

Why this report matters:

- It sets out the current trial landscape and evaluates the massive shift in drug discovery and clinical research.
- It tackles inclusion and diversity highlighting issues with participant recruitment, retention, global representation and the importance of diversity in clinical trials.
- It helps demystify clinical trials so that people living with dementia and their families can understand risk and make informed decisions about whether to participate in a trial.
- It outlines the need to increase clinical trial awareness, education and involvement amongst GPs so they can guide patients.
- It advocates for long overdue diagnostic and treatment breakthroughs

[Read the report in full here](#)



Blood tests could help predict dementia risk more accurately

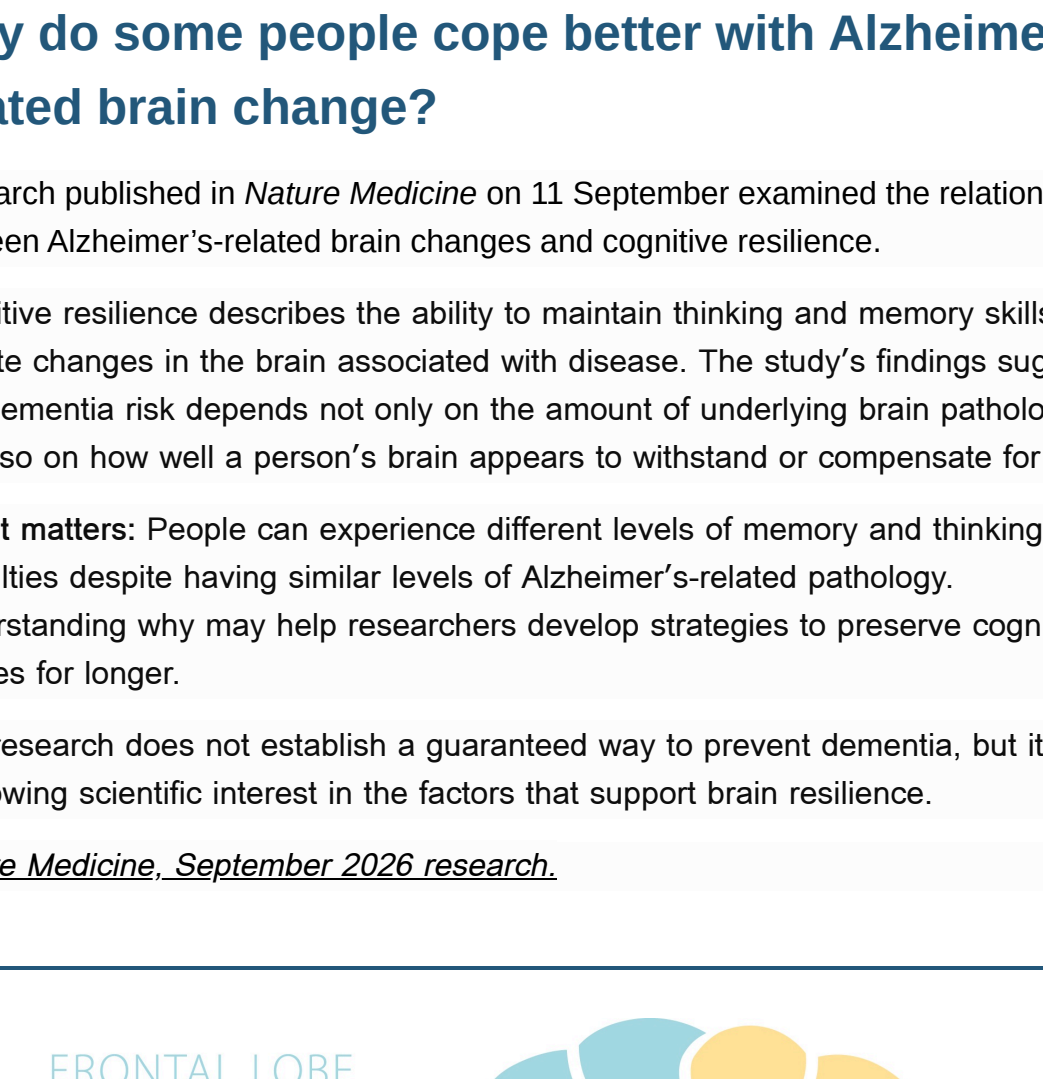
Researchers reported that combining a blood biomarker called p-tau217 with information about the APOE gene improved predictions of cognitive impairment in a study involving more than 8,500 older adults.

The p-tau217 protein is associated with changes in the brain linked to Alzheimer's disease, while the APOE gene influences a person's risk of developing the condition. Combining the two measures may help clinicians estimate risk and the possible timing of future symptoms more accurately.

Why it matters: Blood-based biomarkers could eventually make aspects of Alzheimer's assessment more accessible and help clinicians identify people who may benefit from further investigation. However, predicting risk is not the same as diagnosing dementia, and further work is needed before these findings can be translated into routine practice.

US National Institutes of Health, 2026

Lancet Neurology, 9 September 2026



A major brain atlas offers new clues about Alzheimer's disease

On 23 September, the US National Institutes of Health announced a major research effort mapping gene activity at single-cell resolution across human brain disorders, including Alzheimer's disease.

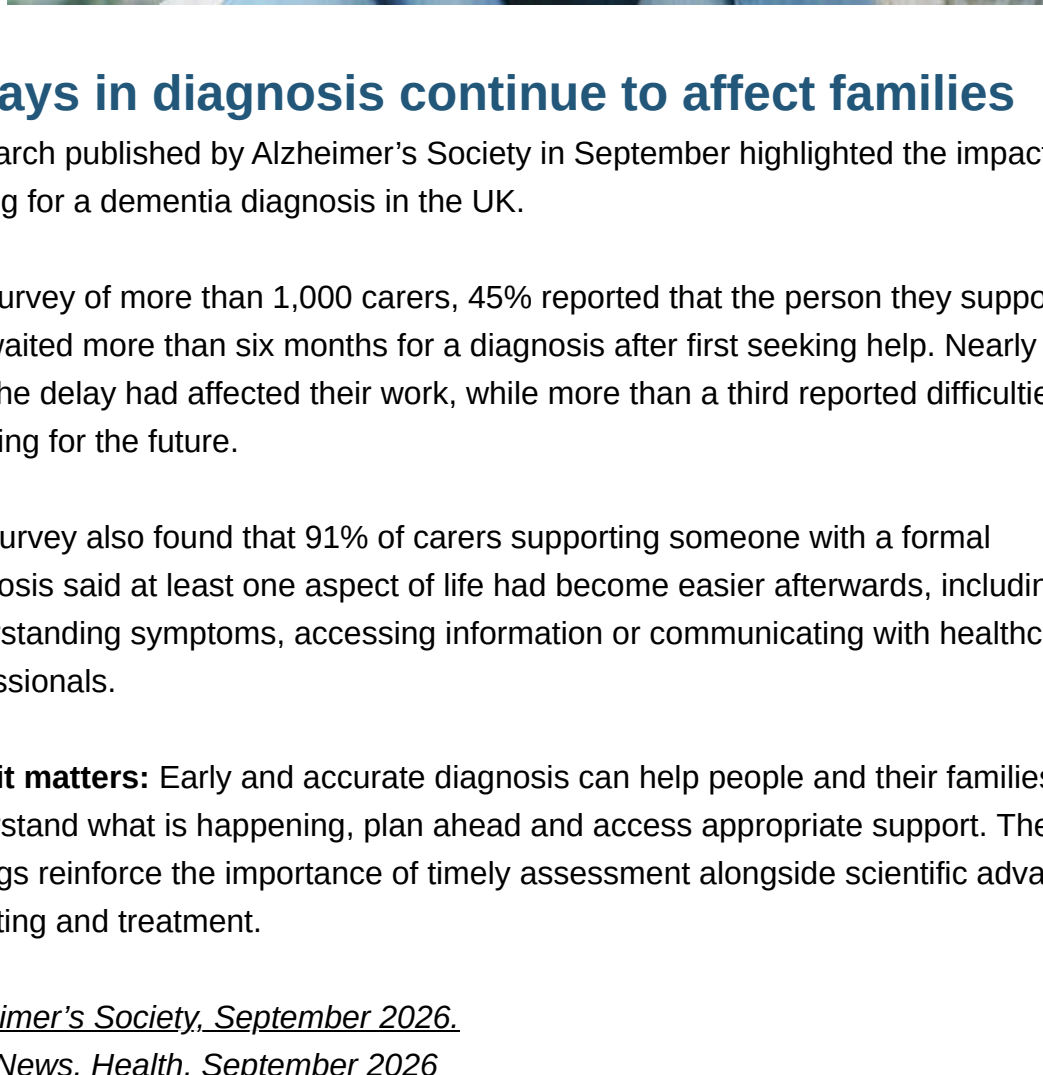
The work provides a more detailed picture of how different brain cells behave and how their molecular activity changes in disease. Researchers hope these insights will help identify biological processes that could be targeted by future treatments.

Why it matters: Alzheimer's affects more than one type of brain cell or biological process. Understanding these differences could help scientists develop more precise diagnostic approaches and treatments tailored to particular disease mechanisms.

The research is an important foundation for future discoveries, rather than a new treatment ready for patients today.

National Institutes of Health, 23 September 2026

Nature Aging, 14 September 2026



Why do some people cope better with Alzheimer's related brain change?

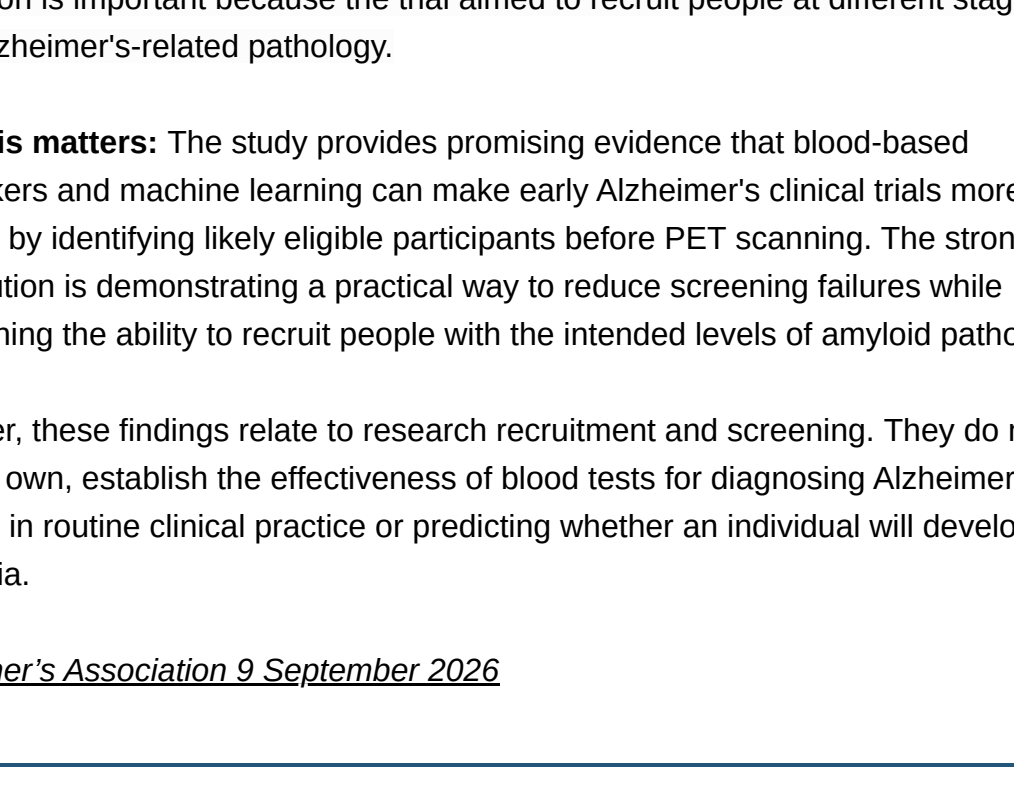
Research published in Nature Medicine on 11 September examined the relationship between Alzheimer's-related brain changes and cognitive resilience.

Cognitive resilience describes the ability to maintain thinking and memory skills despite changes in the brain associated with disease. The study's findings suggest that dementia risk depends not only on the amount of underlying brain pathology, but also on how well a person's brain appears to withstand or compensate for it.

Why it matters: People can experience different levels of memory and thinking difficulties despite having similar levels of Alzheimer's-related pathology. Understanding why may help researchers develop strategies to preserve cognitive abilities for longer.

This research does not establish a guaranteed way to prevent dementia, but it adds to growing scientific interest in the factors that support brain resilience.

Nature Medicine, September 2026 research.



An experimental treatment for frontotemporal dementia shows early promise

A first-in-human Phase 1 clinical trial published in Nature Communications on 14 September investigated VES001, an experimental oral medicine for a genetic form of frontotemporal dementia associated with reduced progesterone production.

The early study found that the treatment was well tolerated and increased progesterone levels. Progesterone is a protein involved in the normal functioning and maintenance of brain cells, and reduced levels are associated with some forms of frontotemporal dementia.

Why it matters: This research represents an early step towards treatments aimed at the underlying biology of particular genetic dementias, rather than simply managing symptoms.

However, a Phase 1 study primarily assesses safety and how a treatment behaves in the body. Larger trials will be needed to determine whether VES001 can slow disease progression or improve symptoms.

Nature Communications, 14 September 2026



Delays in diagnosis continue to affect families

Research published by Alzheimer's Society in September highlighted the impact of waiting for a dementia diagnosis in the UK.

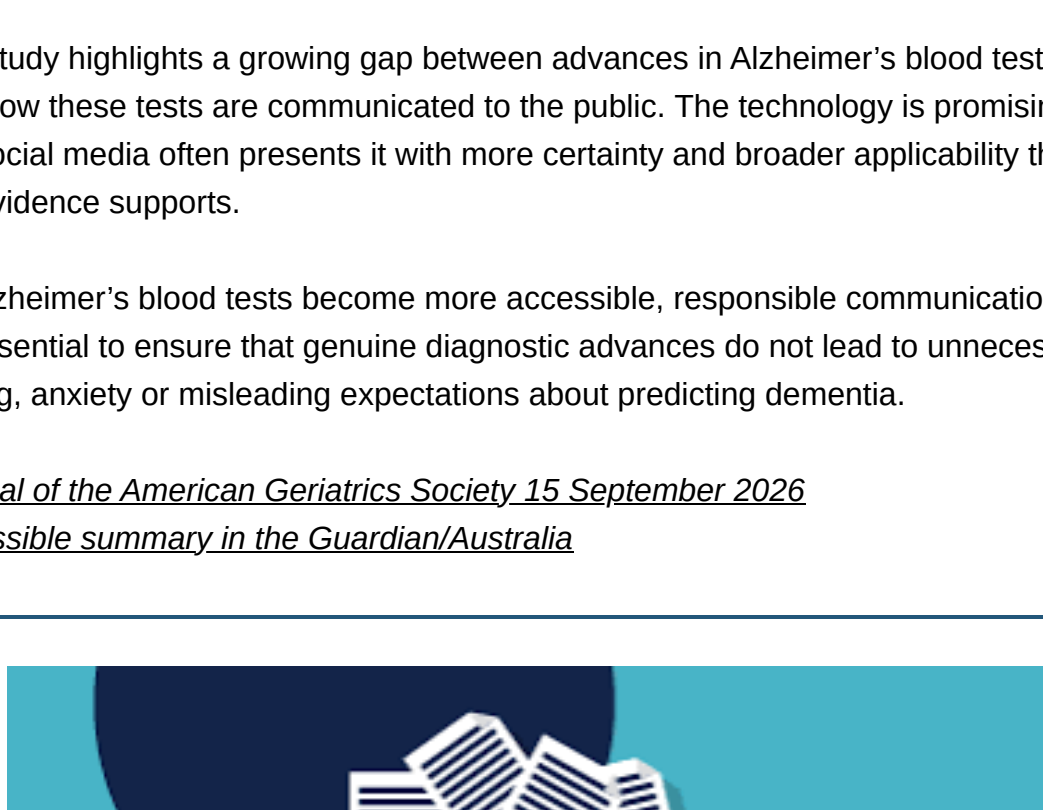
In a survey of more than 1,000 carers, 45% reported that the person they supported had waited more than six months for a diagnosis after first seeking help. Nearly half said the delay had affected their work, while more than a third reported difficulties planning for the future.

The survey also found that 91% of carers supporting someone with a formal diagnosis said at least one aspect of life had become easier afterwards, including understanding symptoms, accessing information or communicating with healthcare professionals.

Why it matters: Early and accurate diagnosis can help people and their families understand what is happening, plan ahead and access appropriate support. These findings reinforce the importance of timely assessment alongside scientific advances in testing and treatment.

Alzheimer's Society, September 2026

BBC News - Health, September 2026



Blood tests could improve efficiency of recruiting people for clinical trial

The study found that using blood tests combined with a machine-learning algorithm can substantially improve the efficiency of recruiting people for Alzheimer's disease prevention trials. The approach helps identify people likely to have amyloid plaques in the brain before they undergo an expensive PET scan.

The proportion of participants found ineligible because their brain amyloid levels were too low fell from 71% to as low as 14% as the screening algorithm was refined.

The researchers used blood-based biomarkers to estimate the likelihood of amyloid accumulation, allowing people less likely to qualify for the trial to be screened out before PET imaging.

The percentage of phosphorylated tau 217 (p-tau217) was the most influential predictor in the model. It helped identify people with high amyloid levels.

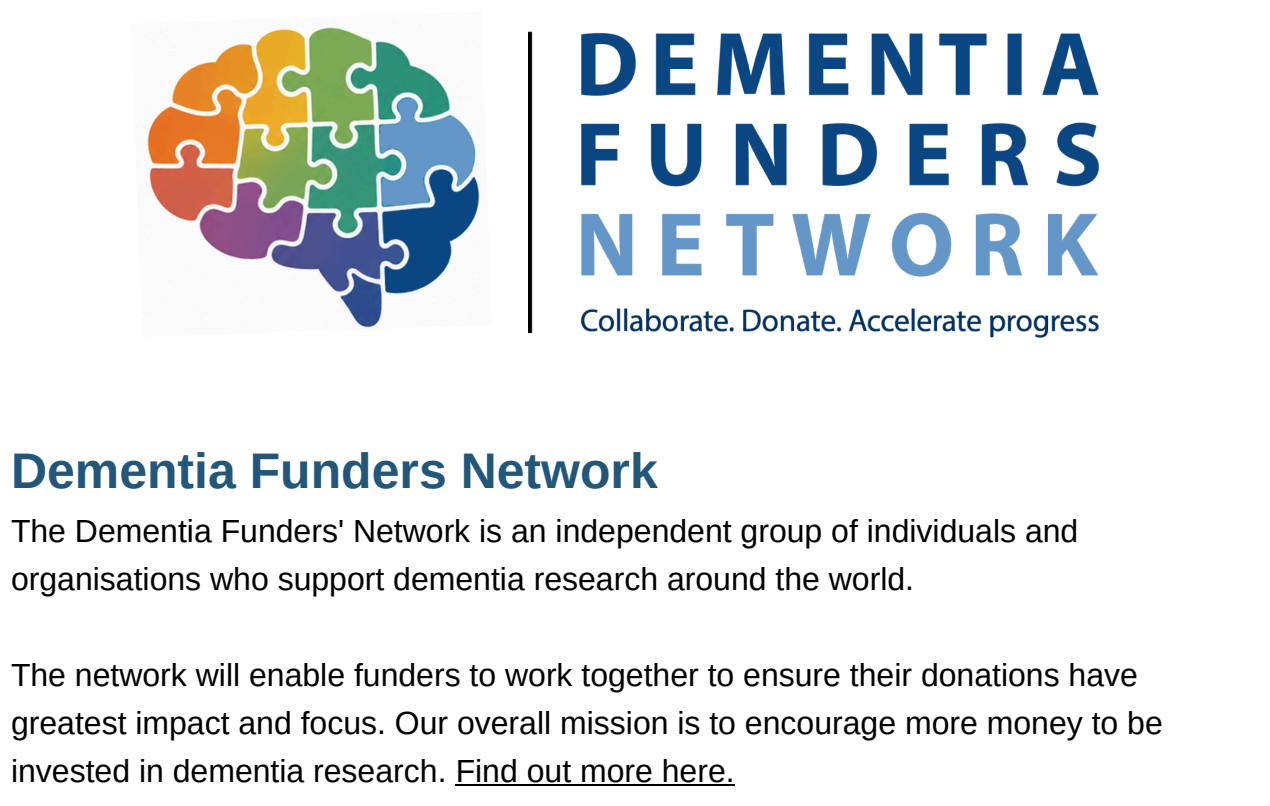
The algorithm incorporated p-tau217, the amyloid-beta 42/40 ratio, age and the number of APOE ε4 gene variants. The amyloid-beta ratio was particularly useful for identifying people with low amyloid levels.

The model identified three groups: low, intermediate and high amyloid burden. This distinction is important because the trial aimed to recruit people at different stages of early Alzheimer's-related pathology.

Why this matters: The study provides promising evidence that blood-based biomarkers and machine learning can make early Alzheimer's clinical trials more efficient by identifying likely eligible participants before PET scanning. The strongest contribution is demonstrating a practical way to reduce screening failures while maintaining the ability to recruit people with the intended levels of amyloid pathology.

However, these findings relate to research recruitment and screening. They do not, on their own, establish the effectiveness of blood tests for diagnosing Alzheimer's disease in routine clinical practice or predicting whether an individual will develop dementia.

Alzheimer's Association, 9 September 2026



Can hallucinations and delusions be reduced with treatment - results from Acadia's Phase 2 trial

Acadia Pharmaceuticals' experimental drug **remilanserin** showed encouraging signs of reducing hallucinations and delusions in people with Alzheimer's disease, but it narrowly failed to meet its primary efficacy endpoint. The company plans to continue into Phase 3, focusing on the higher 60 mg dose.

At 6 weeks, the 60 mg dose improved hallucinations and delusions more than placebo, but the result did not reach conventional statistical significance (p=0.0603).

The 60 mg dose showed greater benefit, while the 30 mg dose produced minimal improvement over placebo.

Acadia plans to continue its two Phase 3 studies and remove the 30 mg arm. Detailed results are expected to be presented at the CTAD conference in November 2026.

Why this matters

Psychosis, including hallucinations and delusions, can be highly distressing for people with Alzheimer's disease and their carers. There are currently no FDA-approved drugs specifically for Alzheimer's disease psychosis, creating a significant unmet clinical need.

If Phase 3 confirms the findings, remilanserin could become an important treatment option, particularly if it can reduce psychotic symptoms without worsening cognition or motor function.

Acadia Pharmaceuticals, 24 September 2026

Researchers warn that social media driving harmful misuse of Alzheimer's blood tests

Research published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society suggests that social media frequently overstates the usefulness of blood tests for Alzheimer's disease, particularly for screening healthy people who have no symptoms.

Researchers analysed 188 posts from Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, published between March 2014 and May 2025.

Many media posts promoted early detection without adequately explaining the limitations, potential harms or need for medical guidance.

The researchers found more than one-third of posts promoted the tests for people without symptoms, and that accounts with explicit financial interests were more than three times as likely to do so.

59% claimed blood tests could improve or accelerate diagnosis. However, fewer than one in five of these posts mentioned the role of healthcare professionals in testing or counselling.

Evidence was often weakly presented and potential harms rarely discussed, with more than one-third using emotional appeals based on fear or hope.

Why this matters?

Blood-based biomarkers, including phosphorylated tau 217 (p-tau217), are a promising development in Alzheimer's diagnosis. They may help clinicians assess people experiencing cognitive symptoms and potentially reduce reliance on more invasive or expensive investigations. However, there is an important distinction between:

- Clinical assessment: Using blood tests under medical supervision to investigate someone with cognitive symptoms.
- Population screening: Testing healthy people without symptoms to identify possible Alzheimer's pathology or future risk.

The second approach raises unresolved questions. A positive result does not necessarily tell someone when, or whether, they will develop dementia. Results can also cause anxiety and lead to further investigations, while there may be no immediate treatment appropriate for an asymptomatic individual.

The study highlights a growing gap between advances in Alzheimer's blood testing and how these tests are communicated to the public. The technology is promising, but social media often presents it with more certainty and broader applicability than the evidence supports.

As Alzheimer's blood tests become more accessible, responsible communication will be essential to ensure that genuine diagnostic advances do not lead to unnecessary testing, anxiety or misleading expectations about predicting dementia.

Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 15 September 2026

Accessible summary in the Guardian/Australia

Summary

September's research highlights three important directions in dementia science:

- Improving early detection.
- Understanding why the effects of dementia differ between individuals
- Developing treatments that target specific disease mechanisms

Although these developments are promising most remain at the early research or clinical-trial stage. There is still no cure for dementia and findings from individual studies need further validation before they can change routine care.

For people living with dementia and their families, timely diagnosis, personalised support and access to appropriate care remain essential while researchers continue working towards better diagnostics and treatment.

We'd love to hear from you

Thank you for signing up for our newsletter, we hope that you will also join us and become a member of our forum, if you haven't already.

We are in the formative stages of this project and would love to hear your thoughts and feedback about the site, the content, the news and the members forum.

Do you know of anyone who wants to support research projects in the dementia space? Do you have suggestions for content, contacts or ideas that can help us bring more money into dementia research.

If so, please email me at info@dementiafundersnetwork.org

**Alzheimer's
Society**

Thank you

With thanks to the Alzheimer's Society Research Communications team for helping signpost the most relevant news.

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Dementia Funders Network

The Dementia Funders' Network is an independent group of individuals and organisations who support dementia research around the world.

The network will enable funders to work together to ensure their donations have greatest impact and focus. Our overall mission is to encourage more money to be invested in dementia research. [Find out more here.](#)

We hope to achieve that by providing a collaborative forum where members can share and discuss dementia projects that need financial help, find potential co-donors and keep up to date with the latest dementia research to inform considered decisions about financial investments. [Join us today](#) and help make a difference in dementia.

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