

# Nerve receptors new target for treating brain disorders

Scientists are now targeting neuronal nicotinic receptors, found on nerve cells throughout the central nervous system, for treatment of a number of neurological and psychiatric disorders. Selective compounds have been developed to activate NNRs in order to stimulate the release of several important neurotransmitters which have been shown to improve cognition in laboratory studies. The brain relies on these neurotransmitters (chemicals such as dopamine and acetylcholine), to enable nerve cells to communicate with one another. Abbott researchers are now developing NNR compounds, including investigational medication ABT-089, for the potential treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

"At Abbott, we've been studying NNRs for more than a decade, and we are hopeful that this innovative research will lead to important advances in the treatment of cognitive disorders that disrupt the lives of patients and their families," said Dr. Mario Saltarelli, divisional vice president, Neuroscience Development, Abbott.

ABT-089 is now being evaluated for its safety and effectiveness in Alzheimer's disease, a progressive and devastating brain disorder that destroys the capacity to remember, reason, communicate, and perform routine tasks. In Alzheimer's disease, nerve cells lose the ability to communicate with one another and eventually die. Developed by Abbott, ABT-089 is designed to activate NNRs in the brain in an effort to restore proper chemical signaling in brain regions damaged by the

disease. Testing of the effects of ABT-089 on cognitive function in Alzheimer's patients is currently under way.

"Clinical trials are crucial to finding new and better ways to treat and prevent Alzheimer's disease," said Dr. Frederick Schaefer, of Neuropsychiatric Associates, an independent medical research company headquartered in Fort Myers. "The effects of Alzheimer's disease can be devastating to patients and their families, and this study offers patients the opportunity to help evaluate the potential of ABT-089, an investigational medication being studied for this disease."

Fort Myers-based Neuropsychiatric Research Center is currently enrolling Alzheimer's patients for a 12-week phase II study of ABT-089. The ideal study participant has been diagnosed with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease and has been on Alzheimer's medication for at least three months. After the 12-week study, participants have the option to openly receive ABT-089 as part of a long-term extension study. Families of people with Alzheimer's disease may visit [www.thinkALZ.com](http://www.thinkALZ.com) or call 243-9982 to contact the clinic. There is no cost to the study participants or their families, and transportation can be arranged.

Complimentary memory screenings are also available at this clinic location to evaluate anyone with concerns regarding memory loss or possible Alzheimer's disease.

Neuropsychiatric Research Center can be reached at 939-7777. ■

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