

## Dr. Douglas Scharre on FDA approval of new drug to treat Alzheimer's Disease

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

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### SOUNDBITES

<b>CG: Dr. Douglas Scharre</b> Ohio State Wexner Medical Center	<p>Scharre says aducanumab clears toxic proteins in the brain: <i>"This drug called aducanumab, which is disease modifying, it gets rid of these toxic amyloid proteins that build up in the brain of Alzheimer's and kills the nerve cells there. So you might imagine, 'Gosh, the earlier that I get rid of this toxic material, my brain's going to be better.' Very true."</i></p> <p>Scharre says current treatments address symptoms, but don't modify the disease: <i>"Our current treatments for things like Alzheimer's Disease and some of these degenerative dementias are symptomatic medications. So we have these things called cholinesterase inhibitors and nmda antagonists, and they all try to help the symptoms, but none of them that are available right now get to what a lot of people think are the core issues to modify the disease."</i></p> <p>Scharre says researchers are now developing treatments that modify Alzheimer's: <i>"We are now working on medications that help to modify the disease, change the disease, so not just helping the brain while it's dying, but actually slow down the course."</i></p> <p>Scharre explains what toxic amyloids do to the brain and how removing them may help: <i>"Amyloid is seen in all patients with Alzheimer's disease. It accumulates into these things called plaques scattered all over the brain, causes toxicity and impairs memory and kills nerve cells. And so this medication gets rid of this toxic protein. The earlier you catch people that have this toxic amyloid in their brain and are not so devastated, still just have very minimal cognitive issues, we're hoping that we can modify the disease. We get this toxin out, and hopefully this will slow down the condition so that your life is improved and you have improved ability to interact with your loved ones and just have a better quality of life."</i></p>
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**CG: Dr. Douglas Scharre**  
**Ohio State Wexner Medical Center**

Scharre explains how misfolded proteins cause plaque in the brain:

*“The aducanumab is designed to remove these toxic proteins that are developed. So they are developing. They are a normal constituent of the brain. Tau and amyloid are normally made. So they’re not abnormal, but they’re abnormal when they start misfolding, and they misfold in an abnormal way, and this misfolding gets them into what I call gunk, other people call plaques or tangles. And aducanumab can grab on to this misfolded protein and get it out of the brain and into the blood system and goes out your urine.”*

Scharre thanks clinical trial participants for helping to find treatments for Alzheimer’s:

*“Ohio State has been involved in clinical trials from early days for these disease-modifying therapies, including aducanumab, and still involved in trials. So many patients, thank you to them for participating in clinical trials. This is how we discover new innovations and treatments for people.”*

Scharre says the new drug is safe and is changing the course of Alzheimer’s:

*“These medications are working. We can keep them safe for people. They get rid of these toxic proteins and it looks like they can potentially change the course of the disease.”*

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