



Allon drug boosts memory in pre-Alzheimer patients

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CHICAGO - A nasal spray made by Allon Therapeutics Inc significantly improved memory in patients with mild cognitive impairment -- a precursor to Alzheimer's disease, researchers reported on Monday.

The drug, AL-108, is among the first of a new class of Alzheimer's treatments to target the fibrous tangles in the brain caused by an abnormal build-up of the protein tau.

Dr. Donald Schmechel of Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, and colleagues studied two doses of the drug in 144 patients aged 55-85 at 16 U.S. centers. All had amnesic mild cognitive impairment, a type that is more likely to lead to Alzheimer's disease than other forms of MCI.

After 12 weeks, the group that got the high dose (15 mg twice daily) had a statistically significant improvement over those who got no treatment in measures of short-term memory, including visual, verbal and auditory working memory, which often worsens as Alzheimer's advances.

Four weeks after the treatment stopped, the group that got the high dose had a 62.4 percent improvement in measures of short-term memory compared to the group that got no drug. No serious side effects were seen, the researchers told the International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease in Chicago.