# Researcher Advances Alzheimer's Treatment Using Repurposed Cancer Drug



Dr. Donna J. Cross, motivated by personal experiences with Alzheimer’s in her family, is advancing research into a potential new treatment for the disease using a repurposed cancer drug, Paclitaxel. Paclitaxel, originally approved by the FDA in 1992 for cancer treatment, has shown promise in reversing cognitive decline in Alzheimer’s-afflicted mice. Dr. Cross’s research at the University of Utah focuses on the drug’s ability to strengthen neuron structures and activate pathways that eliminate damaged cells.

In her studies, Dr. Cross found that administering Paclitaxel nasally allowed it to cross the blood-brain barrier in mice, a critical step for its effectiveness in potentially treating human patients. The next phase involves preparing the drug for clinical trials, which could open treatment possibilities not only for Alzheimer's but also other dementia forms like ALS and Parkinson’s disease.

Dr. Cross’s collaborative efforts with chemists Dr. Jindrich Kopecek and Dr. Jiyuan Yang at the University of Utah aim to get the drug ready for these trials. She highlighted the vast potential impact of her work, stressing the urgency in continuing the development despite the past failures of other drugs targeting typical Alzheimer's biomarkers, such as amyloid proteins.

This breakthrough comes as part of broader efforts in the medical community to find effective treatments for Alzheimer’s, a disease afflicting approximately six million Americans and the most common cause of dementia. Dr. Cross will present her findings at the upcoming Alzheimer’s & Caregiving Education Conference.