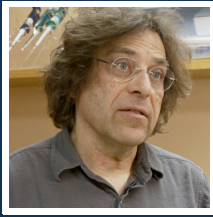


# C. elegans Worms Help Find Treatments for Neurodegenerative Disorders



Chris Link

## CURRENT RESEARCH


Scientists are learning more about Autism, Alzheimer's, ALS, or other neurodegenerative diseases by replicating the pathological processes of such diseases in worms.

Age-associated neurodegenerative diseases, like Alzheimer's, ALS, and Down Syndrome, place a tremendous burden, both financially and emotionally on families, and this burden is only getting greater as people live longer. Researchers have been working to find therapeutic strategies to minimize the burdens brought about by these diseases for a long time. One such strategy has been to use worms, specifically *C. elegans*, as a pilot system. This simple model system allows experimental approaches that are difficult to do in mice (or people!), thereby enabling scientists to more readily take an "unbiased" approach that does not require pre-existing assumptions about how a pathological process works. By using worms to understand the pathological process responsible for neurodegenerative diseases, effective therapies can be developed that rely upon the novel insights found as opposed to the current model of creating therapies prior to knowing how the diseases work.

Dr. Chris Link of the University of Colorado is the molecular geneticist that designed the original models for working with *C. elegans* in order to study disease pathologies. Dr. Link explains that "the best ideas are obvious in retrospect" and this concept has been foundational for him as a scientist. As a young scientist, when he first attempted to make invertebrate models, it was difficult to get funding because no one had previously attempted to use this method. However, because of the ultimate success of his experiments, a subfield of over 100 labs around the world are currently using Dr. Link's methods to study neurodegenerative pathology. While specific genes and proteins have been connected to causing heritable forms of diseases, scientists...

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## AFFILIATION

 University of Colorado, Boulder

## EDUCATION

- B.S., in Biology, 1976, Brooklyn College
- Ph.D., in Microbiology, 1981, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

## RESEARCH AREAS

Health & Wellness, Longevity, Immortality Research

## FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support Dr. Link as he uses novel approaches to understand the basic biological processes underlying age-associated neurodegenerative diseases, which may be essential in finding cures. Dr. Link's research is likely to translate to therapeutics that will change the lives of those affected by Alzheimer's, ALS, and Down Syndrome. Donations will support competitive salaries for personnel and equipment necessary for experimentation.

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