



When amyloid disrupts tau — why the conversation about Alzheimer’s is shifting



For years, the focus in Alzheimer’s disease has been centred on one primary question: how do we remove amyloid?

A growing body of research is now pointing to a deeper issue. Amyloid may not be the end point. It may be the trigger that disrupts something far more critical.

Tau.

In the previous Launex article, we explored how tau becomes unstable, misfolds, and spreads across the brain, driving the progression of dementia as a network-level destabilisation process. What new research now suggests is that amyloid may actively interfere with tau’s normal function, accelerating the very process that leads to neurological collapse.

Tau is not a harmful protein. It plays a stabilising role inside neurons, helping maintain their structure and supporting the internal transport systems required for communication and survival. When tau is disrupted, that stability begins to fail.

Recent findings indicate that amyloid-beta may interfere with tau’s normal binding function, increase the likelihood of tau misfolding, and disrupt the balance that keeps neuronal systems stable. This is not simply a chemical interaction. It represents the beginning of structural instability within the brain.

This strengthens a key principle seen both in research and in practice. The brain does not fail all at once. It destabilises in stages.

The earlier article outlined how tau spreads like a cascade across connected neurons, gradually affecting different systems. What this emerging evidence adds is a clearer relationship between these two proteins. Amyloid may initiate disruption, while tau drives the spread.

This distinction is important because it helps explain why treatments that focus only on amyloid have had limited success in stopping disease progression.

From a Launex perspective, this is not only a biological process. It is something that becomes visible through behaviour.

As tau destabilises neural networks, the systems responsible for higher-level regulation are affected first. The cognitive systems that support reasoning, sequencing, and executive control begin to lose stability. Emotional systems often remain functional for longer, followed by survival-based systems, which are typically preserved the longest.

This progression is not random decline. It reflects a shift in which systems remain stable and accessible.

Families often describe what appears to be a sudden change. A person may seem relatively stable, and then something shifts. However, what they are witnessing is not a sudden event. It is the point at which accumulated instability reaches a threshold where the brain can no longer compensate.

Amyloid may have been present for years. Tau may have been spreading silently across networks. What appears sudden is the moment that underlying instability becomes visible.

This understanding has immediate relevance for care.

It reinforces that dementia is not a process in which everything is lost at once. Instead, it is a reorganisation of function, where certain systems become less accessible while others remain active.

When care aligns with the systems that remain stable, connection can still be built. Trust can still be established. Behaviour can still be understood as meaningful, rather than random or disruptive.

The question, therefore, is not only how dementia progresses, but how we respond to a brain that is reorganising itself.

From the Launex perspective, amyloid may act as a trigger and tau as a driver, but behaviour is where this process becomes visible. This is where clarity is required for families and Dementia Care Specialists.

Dementia does not remove the person. It changes how stability is held within the brain.

Understanding this shift allows care to move from control toward alignment, from reaction toward interpretation, and from frustration toward meaningful connection.

If you want to understand what your loved one's behaviour is communicating, and how to respond in a way that preserves connection and stability, you can explore Launex coaching and training through the website.

References

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