Insulin Resistance & Type 2 Diabetes Linked to Plaques Associated with Alzheimer’s Disease

People with insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes appear to be at an increased risk of developing plaques in the brain that are associated with Alzheimer’s disease, according to new research published in Neurology®, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. The study involved 135 people with an average age of 67 from Hisayama, Japan. The participants had several diabetes glucose tests to measure blood sugar levels. They were also monitored for symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease over the next 10 to 15 years.

Result
- 16% of the participants developed Alzheimer’s disease.
- After the participants died, researchers examined their autopsied brains for the physical signs of Alzheimer’s disease, called plaques and tangles.
- While 16 percent had symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease while alive, a total of 65 percent had plaques.
- People who had abnormal results on three tests of blood sugar control had an increased risk of developing plaques.
- Plaques were found in 72 percent of people with insulin resistance and 62 percent of people with no indication of insulin resistance.
- There was no link between diabetes factors and tangles in the brain.

COMMENT:
According to the study author, Kensuke Sasaki, MD, PhD, there needs to be additional studies to determine if the development of plaques is due to insulin resistance. Sasaki believe that if there is a correlation between plaques and insulin resistance, Alzheimer’s disease can be prevented through control or prevention of diabetes.