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Aducanumab: The Controversial New Drug Licensed to Treat Alzheimer's Disease

A look at the contentious history behind
the first approved anti-amyloid drug

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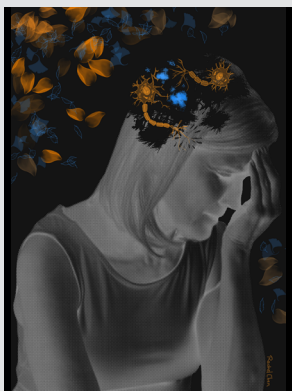
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Cover Art



◀ “BLOSSOM” by RACHEL CHEN

In a recent study led by the neuroscientist Dr Ju-Hyun Lee¹, ‘flower-like’ rosettes were observed in the heavily damaged neurons of victims suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. This unique pattern was dubbed ‘poisonous flowers’. I was inspired by the striking imaging studies he produced, and decided to incorporate this motif into the piece. The blue petals in this piece allude to ‘forget-me-nots’. These small blue flowers represent memory loss, and are also symbols commonly associated with Alzheimer’s. I chose to employ a monochrome halftone composition in order to draw more attention to the details highlighted by the two complementary colours. They illuminate the build-up of amyloid plaques between neurons, which aducanumab has been described to remove.

1. Lee, J. H., Yang, D. S., Goulbourne, C. N., Im, E., Stavrides, P., Pensalfini, A., Chan, H., Bouchet-Marquis, C., Bleiwas, C., Berg, M. J., Huo, C., Peddy, J., Pawlik, M., Levy, E., Rao, M., Staufienbiel, M., & Nixon, R. A. (2022). Faulty autolysosome acidification in Alzheimer’s disease mouse models induces autophagic build-up of Aβ in neurons, yielding senile plaques. *Nature neuroscience*, 25(6), 688–701. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41593-022-01084-8>



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