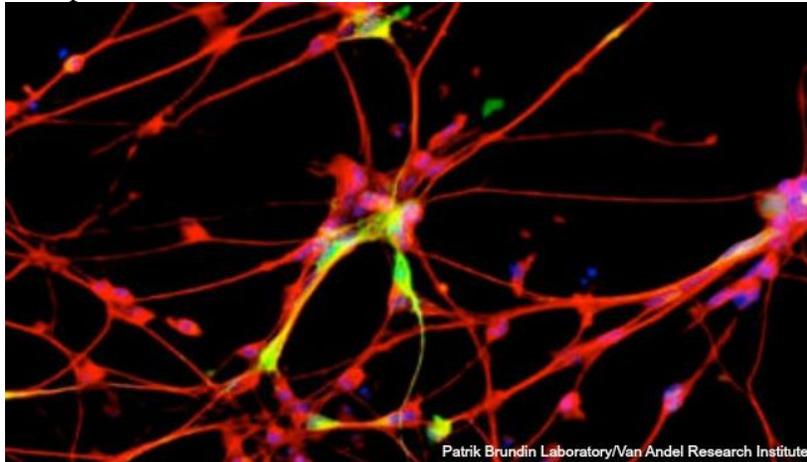


# Drug made in Kalamazoo could be first to treat Parkinson's

<http://woodtv.com/2016/12/08/drug-made-in-kalamazoo-could-be-first-to-treat-parkinsons/>

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Dopamine-producing brain cells after treatment with MSDC-0160.  
(Patrik Brundin Laboratory/ Van Andel Research Institute)

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) — A diabetes drug developed in Kalamazoo is showing promise in treating Parkinson's disease.

The [Van Andel Research Institute](#) says human trials will begin next year for MSDC-0160, which was created by Kalamazoo-based Metabolic Solutions Development Company to treat type 2 diabetes. If the trials are successful, it would become the world's first therapy to treat the debilitating disease and slow its progression.

The VAI says what makes MSDC-0160 different is it seems to regulate the mitochondrial function in brain cells, restoring the cell's ability to convert basic nutrients into energy. Consequently, it restores the cell's ability to handle harmful proteins, lowering inflammation and curbing nerve cell death.

Dr. Patrik Brundin with the VAI says the drug may also reduce or delay the need for other medications that can have serious side effects.

An estimated 7-10 million people worldwide are battling Parkinson's disease, including roughly 1 million Americans. Among those diagnosed with Parkinson's disease were former attorney general [Janet Reno](#) and champion boxer [Muhammad Ali](#), who died in the last two years. Michael J. Fox, [President George H.W. Bush](#) and Detroit [Tigers legend Kirk Gibson](#) are still battling the disease.

Currently there is no cure for Parkinson's disease. So far, all treatments have focused on managing the symptoms. But after four years of studies, Brundin says all research models created by the VAI's Center for Neurodegenerative Science suggest MSDC-0160 could potentially slow the disease's progression in people.

Brundin says he's also eager to see if the drug could help treat Lewy body dementia and other conditions that lead to cognitive decline, like Alzheimer's disease.

The research was funded by VAI, The Cure Parkinson's Trust, the Campbell Foundation and the Spica Foundation. The findings were published Thursday in the journal, "Science Translational Medicine."