

Easier way for adults to learn a language?

Auditory Learning refers to learning through hearing and speaking. Children are skilled at auditory learning, especially in areas of language and music. A common belief is that as we grow older, our auditory learning capabilities diminish.



The Research

Researchers recently found that we may be able to encourage our brains to act more child-like. That is, we can train our brains to be more open to auditory learning – such as learning a new language. Based on studies done in mice, they accomplish this by inhibiting a blocker. In the brain, adenosine is an inhibitory neurotransmitter. Typically, it acts as a central nervous system depressant.

Additionally, the auditory thalamus is the part of the brain which helps learning ability in mice similarly to how children learn via auditory means. Putting this together, the research showed that reducing or blocking adenosine, mice were able to respond and learn more easily, distinguishing tones and remembering tones and sounds much longer. In short, it rejuvenated auditory learning.

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The application

Researchers have started looking at ways to apply these results in adults. To clarify, our knowledge of adenosine or the chemicals used to inhibit it are not new. What is new is the possible application towards improved auditory (amnd language) learning in humans.

So, will we one day pop a pill, open a French book, and wake up the next day fluent? Of course this research is in its infancy, but it may accelerate the way and pace we learn language, but it will not eliminate or replace hard work, dedication, and time to learn a new language. So, sorry no magic pill... yet.

References

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