Afferent.
THE TRACT · MONTHLY NEUROLOGY BRIEF

01
OCTOBER 2026

01 · LEAD · STROKE

Tenecteplase before thrombectomy may help cardioembolic stroke more than atherosclerotic

A conference month: ECTRIMS (held jointly with ACTRIMS as MSToronto) and the World Stroke Congress ran in the same week. Europe tightens the clock on encephalitis, MS moves toward smouldering disease and EBV, and a blood test for Alzheimer's risk drew more headlines than it deserved.

01 Tenecteplase before thrombectomy, by stroke cause
02 EAN–ESCMID encephalitis guideline
03 ECTRIMS in two minutes
04 Plasma p-tau217 and future impairment
! Hype check · ALS

afferent *(adj.) – carrying signals inward, toward the centre.*

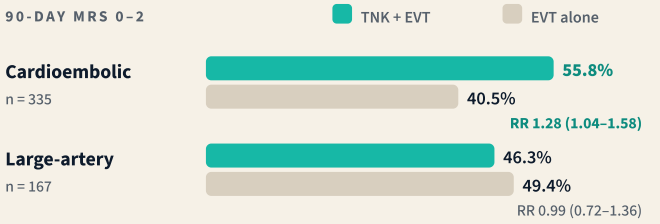
What changed · how strong the evidence is · whether it should change practice

01 STROKE

Secondary analysis of an RCT

What's new. BRIDGE-TNK (China; large-vessel occlusion within 4.5 h) randomised 550 patients to tenecteplase then thrombectomy, or thrombectomy alone. In the 502 with a determined cause, functional independence improved in cardioembolic stroke but not in large-artery atherosclerosis.

Read it carefully. One open-label trial, one subgroup. The interaction test for the primary outcome was not significant (P = .13); it was significant for the shift analysis and for mortality.



BOTTOM LINE

Hypothesis, not practice change. Keep giving thrombolysis before thrombectomy to eligible patients — aetiology is rarely certain at the door.

EVIDENCE ▰▰▱▱▱ PRACTICE CHANGE PRACTICE CONSIDER **WATCH** NO CHANGE [1]

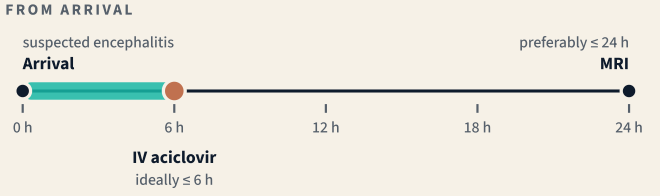
02 NEURO-INFECTION

Guideline

The first joint European guideline on infectious encephalitis puts a clock on aciclovir

What's new. Published 9 October in the European Journal of Neurology. Sixteen clinical questions answered with two evidence-based recommendations and thirteen good-practice statements.

Also. Do not let a multiplex CSF panel replace pathogen-specific PCR. Steroids in HSV encephalitis: insufficient evidence either way.



Lumbar puncture: promptly, unless contraindicated — no fixed hour.

BOTTOM LINE

Audit your door-to-aciclovir time: six hours is now the European benchmark. A negative multiplex panel does not exclude HSV.

EVIDENCE ▰▰▰▱▱ PRACTICE **CHANGE PRACTICE** CONSIDER WATCH NO CHANGE [2]

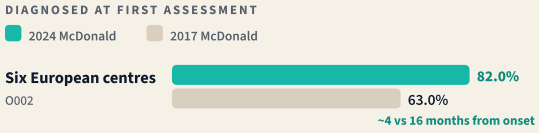
NEXT MONTH CTAD: Eisai says it will present five-year lecanemab data. We will read it before we report it.

03 MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Conference abstracts · 21–23 Oct

ECTRIMS in two minutes: five things from MSToronto2026

Over 7,000 delegates. Most of what follows is abstract-level data, not yet peer reviewed.



BOTTOM LINE

Two are worth acting on: the 2024 criteria, with optic nerve assessment, and rituximab holding up against ocrelizumab on MRI where cost matters. The rest is promising, early, or both.

a **Diagnosis: 2024 McDonald criteria** — CONSIDER

Across six European centres the 2024 criteria diagnosed 82% vs 63% and about a year earlier; optic nerve assessment added most. Multicentre cohort

b **MOGAD: tocilizumab (TOMATO)** — WATCH

102 patients with relapsing MOGAD: relapses 9% on tocilizumab plus prednisone vs 53% on prednisone alone; relapse- and steroid-free at 52 weeks 81% vs 26%. RCT · late-breaking

c **Rituximab vs ocrelizumab (OVERLORD-MS)** — CONSIDER

216 patients: about 92–95% free of new MRI lesions on both drugs; infections somewhat more common with rituximab. RCT · academic

d **BTK inhibitors** — WATCH

Remibrutinib (The Lancet) and fenebrutinib (company data) both beat teriflunomide; fenebrutinib also reduced slowly expanding lesions. No head-to-head with anti-CD20 yet.

Phase 3 · Lancet + company

e **EBV moves to the centre** — NO CHANGE

None of 202 people later diagnosed with MS was EBV-negative; EBV-infected B cells were found in the meninges of all 52 MS brains studied, none in controls. Observational

[3]

04 DEMENTIA

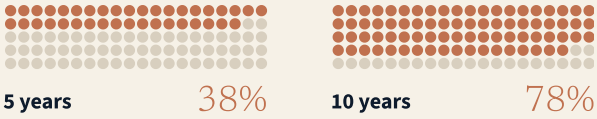
Pooled cohorts · JAMA

Plasma p-tau217 predicts who becomes impaired — over years, not months

What's new. Six cohorts, 2,684 cognitively unimpaired adults; about 478 progressed. Independent of amyloid PET and APOE ε4; the 10-year estimate rests on less data.

BOTTOM LINE

A strong prognostic marker in research cohorts. Not a screening test for healthy people, and there is no approved treatment for those it flags.



EVIDENCE PRACTICE CHANGE PRACTICE CONSIDER WATCH NO CHANGE

[4]

HYPE CHECK · ALS · REGULATORY FILING

An accelerated-approval filing for CNM-Au8, built on trials that missed their primary endpoints

The claim. Clene filed on 19 October, arguing that falling neurofilament light (NfL) predicts longer survival.

The evidence. Neither RESCUE-ALS nor the HEALEY platform arm met its primary endpoint. The survival case rests on later analyses linking NfL change to survival, partly comparing treated patients whose NfL fell with those whose NfL did not.

HYPE

EVIDENCE

BOTTOM LINE

Patients will ask. Unproven; the confirmatory phase 3 is still being set up. Point them to trials, not to the headline.

[5]

QUICK HITS

Myasthenia gravis. FDA approves an autoinjector for self-administered zilucoplan in AChR-positive gMG. 16 Oct

Alzheimer prevention. Fast Track for AV-1959R, an anti-amyloid vaccine. Fast Track is a process label, not evidence. 21 Oct

Spinocerebellar ataxia. FDA accepts the troriluzole resubmission; decision expected Q1 2027. 22 Oct

ABOUT AFFERENT

Free, every month, from The Tract. Selected and edited by

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Editor, The Tract

[1] BRIDGE-TNK aetiology analysis. World Stroke Congress, Seoul, 21–23 Oct 2026; reported by NeurologyLive, 24 Oct 2026. NCT04733742.

[2] Granerod J et al. Diagnosis and management of infectious encephalitis in adults: EAN and ESCMID guidelines. Eur J Neurol 2026. doi:10.1111/ene.70647

[3] ECTRIMS 2026: MS Australia, "Unifying MS", 28 Oct 2026; Giovannoni G, MS-Selfie, "MSToronto2026"; Wiendl H et al. Lancet 2026 doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(26)02058-1; Roche, 21 Oct 2026. Abstracts O002, O090, O134, O137, P0007, P0121.

[4] Buckley RF et al. Prognostic value of blood-based p-tau217 levels for progression to cognitive impairment. JAMA 2026;336(11):950. doi:10.1001/jama.2026.12556

[5] Clene seeks FDA accelerated approval of oral ALS treatment. ALS News Today, 20 Oct 2026.

[·] Quick hits: NeurologyLive FDA news (16, 21, 22 Oct 2026).