When a Brain Injury Impairs Memory, a Pulse of Electricity May Help

August 24, 2023

If you’ve ever had trouble finding your keys or remembering what you had for breakfast, you know that short-term memory is far from perfect.

For people who’ve had a traumatic brain injury (TBI), though, recalling recent events or conversations can be a major struggle.

“We have patients whose family cannot leave them alone at home because they will turn on the stove and forget to turn it off,” says Dr. Ramon Diaz-Arrastia, who directs the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinical Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

So Arrastia and a team of scientists have been testing a potential treatment. It involves delivering a pulse of electricity to the brain at just the right time.

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