April 2025: This Month in Huntington's Disease Research

HDBuzz has ramped up to match the accelerating pace of Huntington's disease research. April 2025 brought us insight on somatic expansion, replacing lost brain cells, and clinical trial updates. Read on for the highlight reel from this month!

By Dr Sarah Hernandez | April 28, 2025 | Edited by Dr Rachel Harding

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April was blooming with fresh updates from the world of Huntington's disease (HD) research, and we've got your highlights right here! At HDBuzz, we're always on the lookout for promising science, innovative ideas, and stories that bring hope. This month, we covered exciting breakthroughs in basic research, important clinical trial updates, and fresh perspectives on the HD community's tireless push toward treatments. Let's dive in!

Do Antidepressants Affect Cognitive Decline? There's More To The Story For Huntington's Disease

New research shines a light on how treatment regimens evolve for people with Huntington's disease. A study from Enroll-HD shows that as HD progresses, most people tend to use more medications - often to manage shifting symptoms like mood changes early on, and movement or behavioral issues later. Antidepressants, especially SSRIs, are among the most common, and are a critical tool in the toolkit for people living with HD.

Science builds knowledge like snowflakes falling on a mountain - each discovery small on its own, but together they shape a towering summit of understanding. Progress for Huntington's disease research may seem slow, but over time, we've come a tremendously long way and it has transformed the landscape.

But new findings from a separate dementia-focused study suggest that SSRIs might come with cognitive risks. But don't toss your meds! Because this study isn't a one-to-one comparator for HD. The big takeaway? SSRIs and other antidepressants are a fundamental piece in treating HD.

Personalized care matters more than ever. The insights from these papers underscore the power of open, ongoing conversations between HD families and care teams to tailor treatments over time. With knowledge in hand, patients and doctors can make informed choices that best support health and quality of life.

Stars in the Sky: Psychosis in Huntington's Disease

Psychosis can be a challenging part of HD, but research is helping shine a hopeful light on this often-overlooked topic. A study found that psychosis symptoms affect about 1 in 6 people with HD and may change how movement symptoms like chorea show up, reminding us that each person's HD journey is unique.

By openly exploring mental health in HD, this research helps break stigma, spark important conversations, and offer practical coping strategies for individuals and families. It's a powerful reminder that no one is alone, and that every person with HD adds their own irreplaceable light to the world.

Piecing It Back Together: Growing new neurons for Huntington's disease

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A groundbreaking new study has flipped the script on what could be possible in HD by showing that the adult brain might be able to regrow the exact neurons lost to the disease - and plug them right back into the brain's circuitry. Using two special proteins as neuron "fertilizer" and "guides," researchers prompted the brains of adult mice to grow new, functional medium spiny neurons - the key cells lost in HD.

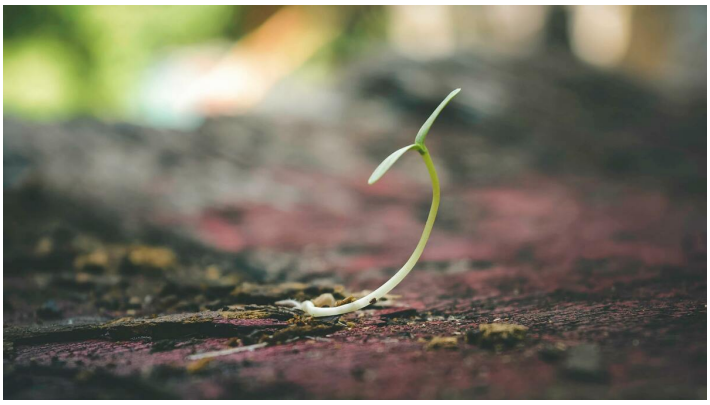
Even more exciting? These new cells not only looked like the right type of nerve cells, but it seems that they connected, can communicate with other cells in the brain, and improved movement in HD-model mice. While this isn't a treatment yet, it's a major leap toward possible brain repair therapies and brings powerful new hope: maybe we can do more than slow down the loss caused by HD - maybe we can rebuild.

Knockouts for the win: how expanding CAGs drive disease

Scientists are closing in on a promising new strategy to slow down HD by targetingsomatic expansion. A new study from the Yang lab at UCLA reveals that blocking certain DNA repair genes - especially Msh3 and Pms1 - could reduce harmful CAG repeat expansion in brain cells of mice.

This genetic tweak seemed to reverse many of the molecular changes seen in HD, improved brain health, and even restored some movement in mice. While mice aren't people, this research builds on years of collaborative work and supports a growing wave of evidence that tackling somatic expansion could be a powerful way to possibly delay or prevent symptoms of HD.

Roche provides an update on tominersen: What's next for this huntingtin-lowering drug?



As April showers bring May flowers, this April has brought a sprinkling of exciting studies for Huntington's disease research. Each one helps nourish a seed of insight that will blossom into future breakthroughs.

Image credit: Gelgas Airlangga

Roche has shared an encouraging update on their HTT-lowering therapy, tominersen, currently being tested in the GENERATION HD2 trial. An independent safety committee reviewed the data and gave a green light to continue - great news for the HD community. Even better, there are no new safety concerns, and the higher dose of tominersen (100 mg) is now considered the more promising path forward. Everyone in the trial will continue with this dose, and the study is still on track to finish in 2026. It's a positive step in a challenging journey - progress is happening, and hope remains strong!

Ten Golden Rules for Navigating Huntington's Disease Research News

In today's whirlwind of tweets, TikToks, and tantalizing headlines, it's easy to get swept up in the hype - but real, meaningful progress toward HD treatments is absolutely happening! To help everyone stay informed without being misled, HDBuzz has refreshed our *Ten Golden Rules* for spotting solid science versus sensationalized spin.

Originally published in 2011 and now updated for 2025, these guidelines are your trusty toolkit for navigating HD research news with clarity, hope, and confidence. From exciting early lab results to promising clinical trials, each snowflake of research builds toward the glacier of real progress - and we're here to help you spot the difference between genuine breakthroughs and clickbait.

Stopping C-A-G Repeat Expansion In Its Tracks

A new study from University College London targets somatic expansion by showing that lowering a key DNA repair protein called MSH3 could stop the harmful C-A-G repeat expansions that some scientists think might drive HD. Using a genetic therapy approach

called antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs), researchers seemed to halt - and in some cases even seemed to reverse - these expansions in lab-grown HD brain cells.

> **"Our Spring Giving Campaign, *"Hope in Full Bloom,"* is in full swing and it's your chance to keep clear, independent HD research news free and accessible for families worldwide. "**

Even better, the treatment seemed well-tolerated in a special mouse model, setting the stage for future clinical trials. While not in trials yet, this exciting work opens the door to an approach several groups are moving forward that they hope might delay the onset and progression of HD, adding to the growing list of innovative strategies aimed at tackling the root causes of HD.

Hope in Full Bloom: HDBuzz Launches Spring Giving Campaign!

HDBuzz is thriving - and it's all thanks to you! Over the past year, we've doubled our article output, expanded our team with fresh voices, launched new social media channels, and received donations from readers like you to help us become an independent non-profit organization. Now, with a tidal wave of HD trial results on the horizon, we're gearing up for our biggest reporting year yet—and we're asking for your help.

Our Spring Giving Campaign, *"Hope in Full Bloom,"* is in full swing and it's your chance to keep clear, independent HD research news free and accessible for families worldwide. Our goal is to raise to $30,000 before May 27. Let's grow together - **donate today** and help HDBuzz stay strong and bloom bright!

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.For more information about our disclosure policy see our FAQ...

GLOSSARY

ASOs A type of gene silencing treatment in which specially designed DNA molecules are used to switch off a gene

clinical trial Very carefully planned experiments designed to answer specific questions about how a drug affects human beings

CAG repeat The stretch of DNA at the beginning of the HD gene, which contains the sequence CAG repeated many times, and is abnormally long in people who will develop HD

neuron Brain cells that store and transmit information

somatic relating to the body

chorea Involuntary, irregular ‘fidgety’ movements that are common in HD

HTT one abbreviation for the gene that causes Huntington’s disease. The same gene is also called HD and IT-15
