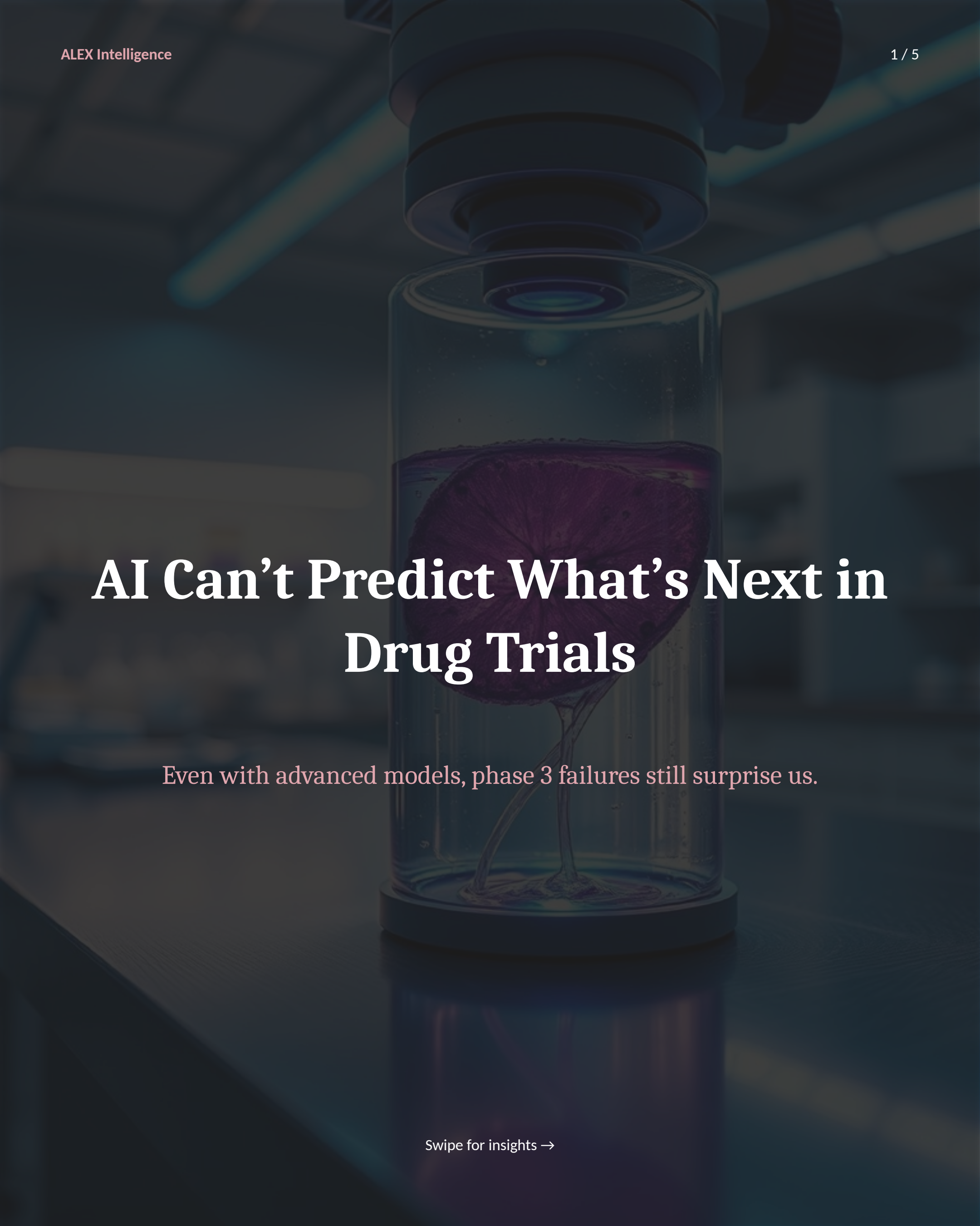


AI Can’t Predict What’s Next in Drug Trials

Even with advanced models, phase 3 failures still surprise us.

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THE DATA

Phase 3 trial failure

Novo Nordisk’s Ziltivekimab

Despite strong mechanistic rationale and early promise, the drug failed its primary endpoint in reducing cardiovascular events.

The Ziltivekimab trial’s failure underscores a critical blind spot in AI-powered drug development: models trained on historical data cannot reliably forecast outcomes in novel therapeutic classes, especially when biological pathways are not fully understood. This gap becomes most visible when trials fail despite high confidence from predictive algorithms.



Source: STAT · Published November 08, 2026
https://www.statnews.com/2026/11/07/aha-2026-conference-novo-nordisk-zeus-trial-ziltivekimab-results/

01

AI Assists, But Can’t Replace Biology

AI excels at pattern recognition in large datasets, but it cannot simulate emergent biological complexity. The Ziltivekimab failure reveals that AI models trained on past cardiovascular trial data may not account for subtle immune-inflammatory feedback loops that only emerge in long-term human use. Without biological grounding, AI risks reinforcing false confidence in high-risk candidates.



02

The Hidden Cost of Over-Reliance on AI Prediction

When AI systems prioritize statistical significance over mechanistic plausibility, they increase the risk of late-stage trial failure—costing billions and delaying real breakthroughs. The cardiologists' continued support for the anti-inflammatory class, despite Ziltivekimab’s failure, suggests that human expertise remains essential in interpreting AI-generated signals. True progress may lie not in better models, but in hybrid frameworks that integrate biological insight with algorithmic forecasting.

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