

Dementia diagnosis may be a relief

Doctors often hesitate when telling someone they may have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, fearing how the person will react. A new study suggests they shouldn't worry when delivering the news.

According to researchers at Washington University in St. Louis, not only did the diagnosis not increase anxiety or depression among patients and their caregivers, most were relieved to have symptoms explained.

The study gauged depression and anxiety before and after an evaluation and diagnosis. Ninety patients and their caregivers were interviewed at the center two days before the evaluation and by telephone two days later. On average, anxiety and depression levels were the same or had decreased for both the person with dementia and the caregiver.

Medical practice guidelines say doctors should tell their patients about a dementia diagnosis regardless of the stage of the disease. According to the researchers, however, a review of published studies dating from the 1970s until very recently showed half of doctors were not telling their patients what they suspected.

Does a large abdomen lead to dementia?

People with larger abdomens in their 40s are more likely to have dementia when they reach their 70s, a recent study found. Researchers measured the abdominal body fat of 6,583 people aged 40 to 45 and followed them for an average of 36 years. Sixteen percent of the participants were diagnosed with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

Previous research has suggested that as many as 50 percent of U.S. adults have an unhealthy amount of abdominal fat. A large abdomen in midlife has been shown to increase the risk of diabetes, stroke and coronary heart disease. However, this is the first time researchers have demonstrated that it increases risk of dementia.

In addition, the study reported that people who were overweight or obese, but without a large abdomen, still had an 80 percent increase in dementia risk. The study provides another reason to control obesity and cardiovascular risk factors. Learn more about how to adopt a brain-healthy lifestyle at www.alz.org.

Exercise could cut risk of mild cognitive impairment

Regular physical exercise may help protect against mild cognitive impairment (MCI), according to a Mayo Clinic study. The physical benefits of exercise are well-known, but this is one of the first studies to examine whether exercise produces chemicals that protect the brain.

were already taking part in the ongoing Mayo Clinic Study of Aging. The researchers gathered data on the level of exercise of participants between the ages of 50 and 65 and during the year prior to the survey. Moderate physical exercise between the ages of 50 and 65 was associated with a reduced risk of cognitive impairment, but the same was not true of exercise during the year prior to the survey.

People with MCI often have trouble remembering details of conversations, events and upcoming appointments, but can handle everyday activities. According to the study's background information, most people with MCI experience a progressive decline in their cognitive abilities, and the underlying cause is usually Alzheimer's disease.

The researchers randomly selected 868 people (128 with MCI) aged 70 to 89 who

Family history boosts Alzheimer's odds

Children face an increased risk of Alzheimer's if both parents have the disease, a recent study reports. The study found that 42 percent of children whose parents both had Alzheimer's went on to develop the disease by age 70. The risk is also greater for developing the disease early if additional relatives had Alzheimer's disease.

had Alzheimer's. Out of 297 children, 23 percent developed the disease. That compares to 6 to 13 percent of people in the general population who would be expected to develop the disease.

among the children was 72. However, if one parent had family members with the disease, the age of onset in their offspring dropped to 60. If both parents had a family history of Alzheimer's, the age of onset was 57.

If other family members also develop Alzheimer's disease, the children in the study were more likely to develop the disease earlier. For example, if only the parents developed Alzheimer's, the typical age of onset

Researchers collected data on grown children in 111 families where both parents

Celery may lessen brain inflammation associated with Alzheimer's

A recent study showed celery can help lessen the inflammation of the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease. The study, published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in its May 27 issue, involved mice made to drink water with luteolin, an antioxidant. The study showed the rodents had reduced inflammation compared with other mice similarly tested with bacteria.

human servings of celery were given daily to the mice. At first, the study showed that the luteolin regulates the inflammation of the brain as a result of certain diseases, such as AD and sclerosis. The result of the experiment suggested plants such as celery are beneficial to the brain in terms of the protection they give.

Research suggests that nutritional deficiencies may possibly be related to AD.

The author of the study noted that about 47

Alzheimer's is now sixth-leading cause of death

Alzheimer's disease is now the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, surpassing diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC estimates that 72,914 Americans died of Alzheimer's disease in 2006. Today, as many as 5.2 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease.

"The CDC's announcement that Alzheimer's disease jumped from the seventh to the

sixth-leading cause of death should serve as a wake-up call to the nation," said William Thies, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association vice president of medical and scientific relations. "The fact that there are no effective treatments for Alzheimer's has allowed the disease to pass diabetes. It is vitally important that we increase Alzheimer's research funding to slow or stop the progression of this devastating disease."

With the disease poised to strike 10 million

boomers, this escalating epidemic must be addressed now. We need your help:

- Become a Champion for the Alzheimer cause.
- Write Congress today and ask your legislators to increase federal Alzheimer research funding and support crucial clinical trials.
- Donate to our mission of a world without Alzheimer's disease.
- Learn how you can help us fight Alzheimer's disease by visiting www.actionalz.org/sixth_leading_cause.asp.

Alzheimer's Facts and Figures 2008 report

According to the 2008 Alzheimer's Disease Facts & Figures report, which was released in March, an estimated 10 million baby boomers will develop Alzheimer's disease in the United States.

The new report says the disease is poised to strike one out of eight baby boomers. According to the Alzheimer's Association, now is the time to address this looming epidemic that currently has no effective disease-modifying treatments that halt or delay the progression of the disease.

"The 2008 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures shows the tremendous impact this disease is having in Iowa and nationwide. With 67,000 people with Alzheimer's disease living in Iowa today and with the prevalence expected to grow to 69,000 by 2010, now is the time to develop an effective blueprint to deal with this disease," said Kelly Hauer, Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Association's East Central Iowa Chapter.

Today, Alzheimer's disease is the seventh leading cause of death in the country and the fifth leading cause of death for those over age 65. Currently, there are as many as 5.2 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. The Association's report offers numerous statistics that convey the burden Alzheimer's imposes on individuals, families, government, business, and the nation's health and long term care systems.

Alzheimer's set in earlier for heavy drinkers, smokers

Heavy drinkers and smokers develop Alzheimer's disease years earlier than people who do not drink or smoke heavily, according to a new study released.

Researchers from the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in Miami, Florida and fellows from the American Academy of Neurology have reported that the combination of heavy drinking and heavy smoking reduced the age of onset of Alzheimer's disease by six to seven years. It has been projected that a delay in the onset of the disease by five years would lead to a nearly 50% reduction in the total number of Alzheimer's cases.

The study looked at 938 people aged 60 and older who were diagnosed with possible or probably Alzheimer's disease. The

researchers gathered information from family members on drinking and smoking history and determined whether the participants had one specific variant of the APOE gene, which increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

People with the variant also Alzheimer's at an earlier age than those who don't have the gene variant. Seven percent of the study participants had a history of heavy drinking, which was defined as two or more drinks per day. Twenty percent had history of heavy smoking, which was defined as smoking one pack of cigarettes or more per day. And twenty-seven percent had the APOE gene variant.

Researchers found that people who were heavy drinkers developed Alzheimer's 4.8 years earlier than those who were not heavy drinkers. Heavy smokers developed the disease 2.3 years sooner than people who did not smoke heavily. People with APOE gene variant developed the disease 3 years sooner than those without the variant.

Adding the risk factors together led to earlier onset of the disease. The study also found that people who had all three risk factors developed the disease 8.5 years earlier than those with none.

Article taken from Daily News Central on April 16, 2008.

Local community member donates proceeds

Lois Massey, owner of Springdale Mercantile, donated proceeds to the Alzheimer's Association East Central Iowa from recent candle sales. Massey donated 10% of her profits from the candle sales in May 2007-December 2007 to the East Central Iowa Chapter, which totaled over \$220.

Massey is the primary caregiver for her husband, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's

disease in 2005. The couple currently lives at home, and while Lois is a full-time caretaker, she also owns and operates a personal business. Lois felt compelled to donate to the Alzheimer's Association because she experiences first-hand how Alzheimer's disease can affect an individual, as well as a family.

"This was something nice to do," said Massey. "Hopefully they will find a cure

at some point. I have children that worry about it, and I can only hope there will be a cure in their lifetime."

The Alzheimer's Association would like to thank Lois for her generous contributions and support. It is individuals like her that allow us to work toward our vision of a world without Alzheimer's.

2008 Facts & Figures

Nearly 10 million Americans age 18 and over provided 8.4 billion hours of unpaid care, which was valued at \$89 billion.

An additional quarter of a million Alzheimer caregivers were children 8 to 18.

2008 Facts & Figures

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