



Alzheimer's Public Health News

November 2020

Cognitive Assessments During Wellness Visits Are Lacking

Only one-quarter of Medicare beneficiaries recall receiving a structured cognitive assessment during an annual wellness visit (AWV), according to [survey results](#) published in *Health Affairs*. Further, individuals enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans who received the AWV were more likely to report receiving a cognitive assessment.

Older adults participating in the [Understanding America Study](#) were surveyed about their receipt of Medicare benefits, including the AWV and cognitive assessments. The AWV requires assessment of possible cognitive impairment, and Medicare encourages use of a validated, structured assessment tool. About half of all respondents reported ever receiving an AWV and 25% reported ever receiving a structured cognitive assessment as part of the AWV. Among Medicare Advantage beneficiaries, 30% reported the AWV structured cognitive assessment while only 23% of Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries reported receiving the same assessment.

Results like these support the need for advancing early detection and diagnosis of cognitive impairment. Public health practitioners can help both the general public and health care providers understand the importance of early detection and recognize the early warning signs of cognitive decline. Learn more in the [Advancing Early Detection](#) issue map or by exploring the public health [Advance Early Detection and Diagnosis](#) resource center.

Alzheimer's Public Health Curriculum



A free, flexible curricular resource introduces Alzheimer's as a public health issue.

The HBI Road Map



HEALTHY BRAIN INITIATIVE
State and Local Public Health
Partnership for Brain Health
The 2010-2023 Road Map

CDC
alzheimers.org

Designed for state and local public health practitioners, the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map encourages 25 actions that help promote brain health, address cognitive impairment, and support the needs of caregivers.

Road Map for Indian Country



HEALTHY BRAIN INITIATIVE
Road Map for Indian Country

alzheimers.org
CDC

Designed for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities, the Healthy Brain Initiative *Road Map for Indian Country* is a guide for AI/AN leaders to learn about Alzheimer's and begin planning their response to dementia.

Training and Educational Resources

- Faculty in higher education can learn how [**A Public Health Approach to Alzheimer's and Other Dementias**](#) — a free, flexible curricular resource about public health's role in addressing dementia — can help educate the future public health workforce. View a [recording](#) of this month's webinar from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and the Alzheimer's Association. Viewers will learn about the imperative for public health professionals to understand dementia as a public health issue, the tested set of curricular resources, and creative applications to instruct students. The recording is accessible on the [ASPPH event page](#).
- Health care providers can learn how to compassionately disclose a timely and accurate diagnosis of dementia, establish person-centered care, and apply key ethical principles when discussing advance care plans through a recent [webinar](#) from the Albany Medical College.



Learn about the public health approach to Alzheimer's with topic-specific primers, examples, and resources at [alz.org/publichealth](#)

Contact

For more information on the Healthy Brain Initiative, public health priorities, or Alzheimer's disease in general, contact [Molly French](#) or check out [alz.org/publichealth](#).

Emerging Evidence

- The proportion of adults aged 45 years and older who report subjective cognitive decline (SCD) — the self-reported increase in confusion or memory loss over the past 12 months — increases as physical activity level decreases, according to [analysis](#) of 2015 [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) (BRFSS) data.

The study population was categorized by their self-reported activity levels: active, insufficiently active and inactive. Of active adults — those reporting at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week — only 8.8% reported SCD. Among insufficiently active adults — those reporting some physical activity, but less than the active population — 11.4% reported SCD, while those with no physical activity reported the highest prevalence of SCD: 15.7%.

Public health interventions that target modifiable risk factors — such as physical activity or [hypertension](#) — can help reduce the risk of cognitive decline across populations.

- Caregivers for people with any condition are more likely to report short sleep duration (less than seven hours of

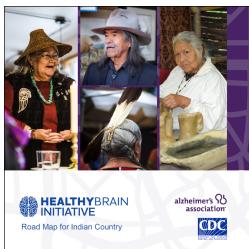
sleep per night) than their non-caregiver peers, according to [analysis of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) (BRFSS) data.

- One in four baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964) is a caregiver, according to [analysis of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) (BRFSS) data. Among those examined, more caregivers — regardless of health condition that requires care — than non-caregivers reported at least one chronic health condition and were more likely to report frequent mental distress. An accompanying [podcast](#) and [short video](#) are available.

Healthy Brain Initiative



The Healthy Brain Initiative's (HBI) [*State and Local Public Health Partnerships to Address Dementia: The 2018-2023 Road Map*](#) is designed to mobilize the public health community in mitigating the future impacts of Alzheimer's and other dementias, especially among vulnerable populations. Read the [full Road Map](#), [executive summary](#) or get started with the [planning guide](#).



The Healthy Brain Initiative's [*Road Map for Indian Country*](#) is a guide for American Indian and Alaska Native leaders to learn about dementia, educate their communities, and start taking action against Alzheimer's. Read the [full Road Map](#), [executive summary](#), or the [dissemination guide](#) to get started.

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