**Latest News on Alzheimer’s Disease and Asian Americans**

**It should surprise no one that there are more seniors suffering from dementia, including Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) in China than anywhere else in the world. With 15.07 million seniors in China identified with AS – that would be ¼ of seniors in the world impacted by dementia. When a nation has that many citizens with mental health problems, it has a national crisis. This is a public health problem and a social problem.**

**One in nine (1/9) people in America has dementia or AD. Numerically that is roughly 6.7 million people, but more cogent for us seniors, there are 6.5 million afflicted.**

**What can be done to avoid AD or dementia? Bad news is that is cannot be prevented indefinitely, but good living habits can keep most people healthy longer than those who live dangerously. Your doctor should be able to recommend live style changes when a patient has high blood pressure, diabetes or social isolation. Most people do not make proper changes, as only 2% of the population is making the necessary life style changes to counter the dangers of AD and dementia.**

**This pertains to Asian Americans. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Asian Americans ages 65 or older account for more than 8% of AD, despite that Asians constitutes less than 6% of the nation's population.**

**It is not known why there is a difference. Diet is likely a partial answer.**

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**SOURCE:**

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**Alzheimer's Disease in China and in Asian Americans**

Seldom do we hear that China would mount a national health campaign to reach its 1.42 billion population. But a national cross-sectional study showed that China had roughly 15.07 million people over 60 years old living with dementia, accounting for a quarter of all dementia patients worldwide. AD and other dementia have become an increasingly serious public health and social problem.

In 2020, as part of the Action Plan for Healthy China 2030, China has decided that a national dementia plan for community comprehensive prevention and treatment for Alzheimer’s should be created by its National Health Commission. To intensify this effort, the Health Commission announced on June 14, 2023 that it is launching a 3-year early intervention campaign in China to increase social awareness and treatment of patients with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) from 2023 to 2025. This campaign will include encouraging local governments to offer annual screening to citizens over 65 years old.

Studies by Alzheimer’s Research UK showed that **only 1 in 3 people recognize that AD is not an inevitable by-product of aging.** Further, the studies suggested that **up to 40% of AD cases could be prevented if people were mindful of the personal modifiable risk factors for the illness (for example: high blood pressure, diabetes, social isolation) and made lifestyle changes to prevent them**. But according to Alzheimer’s Research UK, **only 2% of people are doing what they can to keep cognition intact despite that steps can be taken to minimize the risk of dementia.**

**According to the 2019 data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mortality for AD in America was 37 per 100,000, making AD the 6th-leading cause of death in the U.S. Moreover**, the deaths of dementia in America were estimated to have increased by 16% during the COVID-19 pandemic. the **newest estimate in 2023 show that 6.7 million Americans aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's dementia today**. **According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Asian Americans ages 65 or older account for more than 8% of AD, despite that Asians constitutes less than 6% of the nation's population.**

How much does AD costs in the U.S.? According to the 2023 Alzheimer's disease facts and figures, the average payment per-person for Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older with AD or other dementias are almost three times as great as payments for beneficiaries without these conditions, and Medicaid payments are more than 22 times as great. Total payments in 2023 for health care, long-term care and hospice services for people aged 65 and older with dementia are estimated to be $345 billion! If you are rich and can afford care for AD, you are lucky. Or the alternative is to be poor so as to qualify for MediCaid, which pays in-home support services or nursing home care. But if you are neither, your retirement income and whole life’s savings can go towards paying for the expensive around-the-clock supportive care for family members inflicted by AD. And if you cannot afford the nursing costs and become the caregiver instead, your quality life could continue to spiral downhill for the next ten or more years as AD takes its own course and continue to deteriorate.

However, we do have some lights at the end of the tunnel. With the arrival of more new drugs to control AD (we have three FDA-approved drugs currently and 140+ investigative drugs in the pipeline) and along with the effective risk factors modification strategy, we hope that the proportion of people affected by this awful disease can decrease soon. And with the acute shortage of trained caretakers for patients with AD, will special AD caretaker robots be introduced to give us a hand one day soon?