



Preventing, improvement the comfort of living and a sense of dignity in Alzheimer's Disease

Zbigniew Tomczak

Polish Alzheimer's Association www.alzheimer-waw.pl

In Poland, about 370 - 460,000 suffer from Alzheimer's disease, the forecast by 2050 assumes a threefold increase in the incidence. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60% of dementia cases. The following needs and solutions apply to all dementia diseases. In the world of the top 10 causes of death, Alzheimer's disease is the only one that we cannot prevent, cure, or delay, and low levels of awareness make it worse.

As early as 2011, Poland recognized Alzheimer's disease as one of the key topics of the presidency in the European Union, recommending Member States to take all measures to improve the quality of treatment, rehabilitation, and social welfare, also by increasing financial outlays for these tasks, in the form of an integrated and comprehensive policy countries. Unfortunately, this plan still exists today only as a concept.

Caring for sick people requires interdisciplinary activities and ensuring the dignity of being ill should not rest solely with caregivers. It is necessary to increase the availability of diagnostic screening tests and treatment, to deepen and disseminate specialist medical and preventive knowledge, to standardize research, to professionalize care, to rationalize costs and to ensure the sustainability of services.

One of the main problems is the lack of support for informal caregivers who require psychological, legal and often financial help. Carers are usually family members who often spend many years of hard work with the patient.

The problem is the fatigue and burnout of caregivers, which is caused by poor access today and 24-hour care facilities, hospices, as well as insufficient number of trained medical and care staff. In order to ensure an adequate level of decent illness, it is also important to allocate appropriate funds for the treatment and care of the patient (including financing hygiene measures or lymphatic funds that have not been valorized for years), education of medical staff and educating the public about this disease. preventing stigmatization of the sick, and finally preparing legal regulations on prior informed choices and health checks at further stages of the disease, e.g. incapacitation, legal guardian.

The implementation of the 2012 by the scientific community and Alzheimer's associations of the Polish Alzheimer's Plan, which includes a comprehensive model of medical and social care

in the field of diagnosis and treatment, and support for caregivers, including the implementation of early diagnosis standards.

This plan is included in the statutory regulations, i.e., the Public Health Act of September 11, 2017. which creates tools for the implementation, and one of the five operational goals of the National Health Program is the promotion of active and healthy aging.

Prevention, treatment, care during the disease and support for caregivers are the responsibility of two ministries: the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, which should create a uniform system to reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's and, above all, to urgently introduce a standard screening test for patients 65 + as well as analyse the epidemiological situation. This will allow to reduce the rate of growth of sick people (currently it has increased to 4% annually).

Every person living with Alzheimer's (as well as with other dementia diseases) has the right to a dignified experience of the disease, and thus to:

- diagnosis as soon as possible,
- access to high-quality support after diagnosis,
- subjective, coordinated care throughout the disease period,
- equal access to treatment and therapeutic treatments,
- the same treatment as other people in the community

In the opinion of the surveyed families, 95% of the burden of caring for the patient is transferred to the family. It is a long-term work of informal carers "36 hours a day". A more patient and carer-friendly system is needed, which will improve the quality of life and the sense of dignity in many years of illness.

The slogan "race against time", which is often used by Alzheimer's organizations around the world, is still valid today. The earlier the disease is diagnosed, the longer the patient will be able to participate in conscious social and family life.



RISK FACTORS

- Age
- Head injuries
- Loneliness and lack of social contacts
 - Degree of education
 - Arterial risk factors:

Hypertension

Diabetes

Obesity

Heart disease

Atrial fibrillation



Reduce the risk of dementia

Research confirms that leading a healthy lifestyle can help reduce the risk of dementia late in life.

The general rule is: what is good for the heart is good for the brain, so both is good for a balanced diet, and regular physical and mental exercise.



Dementia - risk reduction and diagnosis

**diagnosis of dementia is done too late
in low- and middle-income countries, only one in ten people
receive a diagnosis**

**governments have the ability and duty to dramatically
increase the detection and diagnosis of dementia
prior diagnosis is intended to help change the perception of
dementia**

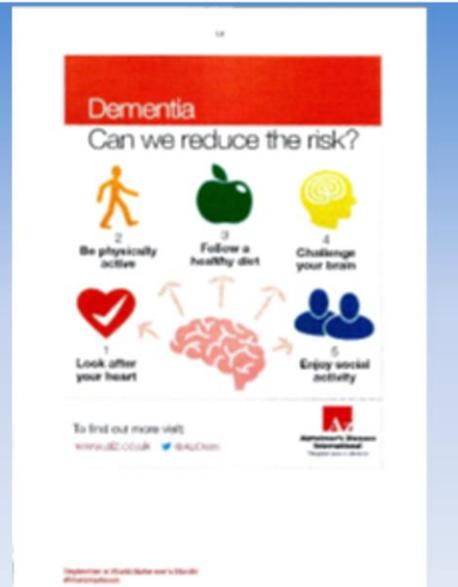
**people with dementia previously diagnosed have a unique
opportunity to take part in a study to detect dementia**



- **10 signals**
- **Memory loss**
- **Difficulties in performing known tasks**
- **Problems with the wording**
- **Disturbed orientation in time and space**
- **Poor or decreased understanding**
- **Problems organizing items**
- **Lost items**
- **Changes in mood and behaviour**
- **Image problems and spatial relationships**
- **Withdrawal from work or social activities**
-



- 5 ways to reduce risk
- take care of your heart
- be physically active
- follow a healthy diet
- be mentally active
- be socially active
-



The disease should not be a judgment

You can live with it, provided that , others understand what it is about and how they can help deal with the problems it poses to the patient and his loved ones



• Appeal Alzheimer 's Disease International

-
- Make dementia a global health priority
 - Reduce stigma
 - Facilitate research
-

www.alzheimer-waw.pl

alzheimerpl@gmail.com

ul. Emilii Plater 47; 00 -118 Warszawa