



**Alzheimer's Disease
International**

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

There is no single test that can show whether a person has Alzheimer's disease. Physicians use a variety of tests to determine if a person has Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia, since it may be difficult to specifically identify the exact cause. There are a number of causes of cognitive impairment and memory problems, including Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia, as well as certain vitamin deficiencies, depression, stroke, infections, endocrine disorders and medication side effects. Therefore, it's important to obtain the right diagnosis so that the doctor can properly treat the patient. In some cases the conditions are reversible if caught soon enough. Medical history and physical exams with special attention to a neurological and psychiatric evaluation, cognitive tests, brain scans and laboratory tests are often performed to make a diagnosis for the cognitive complaints. If you or a loved one have concerns about memory loss or other symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia, it is important to be evaluated by a physician.^{1,2}

While there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, there are many benefits to obtaining an early and accurate diagnosis. Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia are under-diagnosed and often misdiagnosed worldwide, and when a diagnosis is made, it is typically at a relatively late stage in the disease process. Receiving an accurate diagnosis can help avoid potentially harmful or inappropriate procedures or treatments, and help the patient gain access to the right treatment for what is causing the cognitive problems.

To help alleviate stress associated with a visit to the physician, it's best to be as prepared as possible. Lack of communication between patients and/or caregivers and physicians was cited as one of the most common barriers perceived by physicians as impacting their ability to make a formal Alzheimer's disease diagnosis, according to results from *The International Alzheimer's Disease Physician Survey*. Of the nearly 1,000 physicians who treat Alzheimer's disease from the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), France, Italy and Japan, 40 percent of respondents reported that patients and caregivers did not provide enough information to help them make a formal diagnosis. When asked what information would aid them in making a more definitive diagnosis in the absence of clinical evidence, physicians surveyed indicated that reports about the types and durations of symptoms, how symptoms affect daily life, rate of decline and family history would help.³

PATIENT / CAREGIVER JOURNAL

The patient / caregiver journal is designed to help improve communication between patients and/or caregivers and physicians. Use this tool to track daily behaviours, activities, medication use and other important information. Recording information on daily routines and bringing it to your next doctor's visit allows the doctor to assess behavioural patterns and identify potential symptoms, which can be difficult to describe during the visit. The journal can be used as a tool to help start a conversation with your doctor around the exact cause of the memory impairment, and this may aid in obtaining a more accurate and prompt diagnosis. Early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease can provide more time to plan for the future and lessen anxiety about unknown problems, as well create the option to participate in clinical trials.^{1,2}

1. Alzheimer's Disease International. World Alzheimer Report 2011. <http://www.alz.co.uk/research/WorldAlzheimerReport2011.pdf>. Published September 2011. Accessed August 28, 2013.
2. Alzheimer's Association. Alzheimer's Association report: 2011 Alzheimer's disease facts and figures. *Alzheimers Dement*. 2011;7:208-244.
3. Data on file, Eli Lilly and Company: AMY20120913A. August 2012.

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DATE OF VISIT:

Indications of Memory Loss: _____

Other Symptoms Such as Mood Change, Agitation, Getting Lost, etc.: _____

Mood / Personality Change: _____

Medications: _____

State of General Health: *(e.g., changes since last entry such as cold, back pain, etc.)* _____

Additional Notes: _____

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