



## Alzheimer's Disease International

# PATIENT & CAREGIVER RESOURCES

While there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, there are benefits to obtaining an early and accurate diagnosis. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia accounting for about 60 to 80 percent of cases worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Dementia is often unrecognised. In fact, as many as half of people satisfying diagnostic criteria for dementia have never received a diagnosis.<sup>2</sup> Diagnosis is often delayed by as much as three years and when a diagnosis is made, it is typically at a relatively late stage in the disease process.<sup>3</sup>

Differentiating Alzheimer's disease from other types or causes of cognitive impairment including normal aging requires a thorough medical evaluation.<sup>2</sup> When symptoms are mild, there is a good chance that conditions besides Alzheimer's disease are the sole or contributing cause and may be alleviated.<sup>2</sup>

Early diagnosis allows people with Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia time to plan ahead while they still have the capacity to make important decisions about their finances, occupation, relationships and medical care.<sup>4</sup> Patients and caregivers can receive timely practical information, advice and support.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, intervening early with therapeutic interventions is usually more effective than waiting – including for treatment of depression, and delaying residential placement, as well as improving caregiver mood and quality of life.<sup>4</sup> It is simply not true that there is 'no point in early diagnosis' or that 'nothing can be done.'

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.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of causes of cognitive impairment and memory problems, including symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia, as well as certain vitamin deficiencies, depression, stroke, infections, endocrine disorders and medication side effects.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

In recognition of World Alzheimer's Day on September 21, 2012, Eli Lilly and Company conducted a **global survey of physicians** to help increase awareness of the perceived barriers to obtaining a formal Alzheimer's disease diagnosis, the impact of stigma surrounding diagnosis and the current state of physician knowledge about the disease.

This resource is sponsored by Lilly



Results of *The International Alzheimer's Disease Physician Survey*, which was carried out by Adelphi Research on behalf of Lilly, indicated there are physician-perceived barriers impacting their ability to make an accurate and timely diagnosis, including lack of a definitive test, lack of communication and patient denial.<sup>5</sup>

To address these important needs, Lilly and Alzheimer's Disease International have partnered to develop educational resources to facilitate more effective patient/caregiver and physician conversations. These resources focus on helping patients and caregivers better identify key cognitive symptoms that could point to a more serious issue, as well as how best to communicate information and concerns to physicians.

- > **Understanding the Signs & Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease:** If you're unsure whether you or a loved one may be experiencing the signs or symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, this **Patient / Caregiver Questionnaire** may help to inform your decision on when it's time to make an appointment with a doctor.
- > **Communicating with Your Doctor About Alzheimer's Disease:** Use the **Patient / Caregiver Journal** to track daily behaviours, indications of memory loss, medication use and other important information to help prepare and effectively communicate with your doctor. Recording information on daily routines and bringing it to your next doctor's visit will allow the doctor to assess behavioural patterns and identify potential symptoms, which can be difficult to describe during the visit.
- > **Preparing for the Future During the Progression of Alzheimer's Disease:** Alzheimer's disease can be a challenging journey, not only for the person diagnosed, but also for their family members and loved ones. If you or your loved one has been diagnosed by a medical professional with Alzheimer's disease, take the first step in preparing for the future by reading through this **guide**, which includes key information on planning for the road ahead.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MEDIA

- > **The Burden of Alzheimer's Disease and Benefits of Early Diagnosis Infographic**

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1. Alzheimer's Association. 2013 Alzheimer's disease facts and figures. *Alzheimers Dement*. 2013;9(2).
2. Alzheimer's Association. Alzheimer's Association report: 2011 Alzheimer's disease facts and figures. *Alzheimers Dement*. 2011;7:208-244.
3. Speechly CM, Bridges-Webb C, Paasmore E: The pathway to dementia diagnosis. *Med J Aust*. 2008;189:487-489.
4. Alzheimer's Disease International. World Alzheimer Report 2011. <http://www.alz.co.uk/research/WorldAlzheimerReport2011.pdf>. Published September 2011. Accessed December 2013.
5. Data on file, Eli Lilly and Company: 20120913A. August 2012.