



**Alzheimer's Disease
International**

The global voice on dementia

WHO 74th World Health Assembly Statement submitted by Alzheimer's Disease International

Written statements exceptionally considered under agenda item 17, WHO's work in health emergencies and strengthening preparedness for health emergencies

Honourable chair and distinguished delegates,

Older people, including those living with dementia, have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Emerging mortality data underlines the urgency for the protection and prioritisation of people with dementia. In Canada, of all COVID-19 deaths in 2020, dementia or Alzheimer's was reported on 36 per cent of death certificates; in Australia dementia constituted 41% of all COVID-19 deaths; 26% in the UK; and 20% in regions of Italy. Many governments are still to publish their data, and, more worryingly, many are not capturing this data at all.

The pandemic has resulted in major disruption to the dementia diagnosis pathway and to the provision of care and support. Restrictions have also had a negative impact on cognitive decline, with additional challenges and pressures for people living with dementia, and their carers, due to the nature of the condition. Delaying diagnosis reduces care and treatment options, especially in the mid to late stages.

Emerging research is also showing the increased risks of long-COVID, which we fear will have a major impact on future prevalence and the earlier onset of dementia symptoms. This is particularly poignant, in the continued absence of any disease modifying treatment and with pre-pandemic forecasts for dementia already showing a tripling of cases from 50 million today, to 152 million by 2050.

We call on Member States to urgently recognise and respond to the particular and disproportionate impact this pandemic is having on older people and people living with dementia, to work closely with NGOs, including ADI and its global network to ensure that these two constituencies are at the forefront of future preparedness plans and to build resilience.