



Dementia fact sheet

Dementia is a collective name for progressive degenerative brain syndromes which affect memory, thinking, behaviour and emotion. **Alzheimer's disease** and **vascular dementia** are the most common types of dementia and are responsible for up to 90% of cases of dementia.

Dementia knows no social, economic or geographical boundaries. Although each person will experience dementia in their own way, eventually those affected are unable to care for themselves and need help with all aspects of daily life. There is currently no cure for dementia, with some limited symptomatic treatment options, and emerging disease modifying treatments, which continues to highlight the importance of care, information, advice and support.

Symptoms may include:

- Loss of memory
- Difficulty in finding the right words or understanding what people are saying
- Difficulty in performing previously routine tasks
- Personality and mood changes

Key facts around dementia

- Every 3 seconds, someone in the world develops dementia
- Dementia is now the 7th leading cause of death worldwide, and increasingly the leading cause in some countries
- The number of people living with dementia around the world is over 55 million, which is expected to rise to 139 million-people by 2050
- The annual global cost of dementia is over US\$ 1.3 trillion annually, which will more than double to US\$ 2.8 trillion annually by 2030
- 50% of the costs for dementia are related to informal care
- Informal care hours for those living with dementia stands at 133 billion hours yearly, the equivalent of 67 million full time workers
- 40% of cases of dementia could be delayed or reduced
- Globally 75% of people with dementia are undiagnosed
- 85% of people living with dementia are not receiving post-diagnostic support
- 1 in 4 people think there is nothing we can do to prevent dementia
- 35% of carers across the world said that they have hidden the diagnosis of dementia of a family member
- Almost 62% of healthcare professionals worldwide wrongly think that dementia is part of normal ageing
- Women provide a substantial proportion of informal care for people living with dementia, with around two thirds of primary caregivers overall being women. This figure is significantly higher in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), areas which will account for 71% of the global prevalence of dementia by 2050
- In low- and middle-income countries, 90% of the care for those living with dementia occurs in the home

An absence of dementia public policy renders many governments woefully unprepared for growing public health emergency that dementia presents to society. It is essential that governments around the world act now to reduce the impact of dementia, by raising awareness and promoting risk reduction, and by supporting increased diagnosis, care and research, through the implementation of **National Dementia Plans (NDPs)**.

It is vital that all governments create and fund NDPs, in line with the [WHO Global Action Plan \(GAP\) on the public health response to dementia](#), to improve the lives of those living with dementia and carers and mitigate its wider effects on society