



DEMENTIA IN INDIA – SOCIAL ISSUES

NEWS: India is expected to host over **15% of the world's elderly population** by 2050.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

- Dementia cases in India are predicted to grow from **8.8 million in 2023 to 17 million by 2036**, marking a **97% increase**.
- **Early-onset dementia** (ages 30-50) constitutes **5-10%** of global Alzheimer's cases, indicating growing concern.

Key Risk Factors for Dementia

- **Age** is the strongest risk factor, with prevalence increasing significantly with advancing years.
 - Dementia prevalence doubles every five years after age 65.
 - By age 85, one in three individuals is affected.
- Contributing factors include:
 - **Genetics**
 - **Lifestyle choices** (diet, tobacco, alcohol)
 - **Chronic conditions** (diabetes, hypertension)
 - **Urbanisation and demographic shifts** in India.
- **Young-onset dementia** accounts for **up to 9%** of cases, with symptoms appearing before age 65.

Economic Burden of Dementia Care

- Cost of care varies with disease stage and location:
 - **Urban households:** ₹45,600 to ₹2 lakh annually.
 - **Rural households:** ₹20,300 to ₹66,025 annually.
- Advanced treatments, such as **FDA-approved drugs like aducanumab**, can cost millions.
- Monthly expenses for basic dementia care:
 - Consultations and medications: ₹2,000–5,000.
 - Home care/assisted living: ₹15,000–75,000.



Dementia Treatment Approaches

- **Medications:**
 - **Cholinesterase inhibitors** and **memantine** for symptom management.
- **Non-pharmacological therapies:**
 - **Cognitive therapies**, behavioral interventions, and physiotherapy.
 - **Caregiver support programmes** and assisted living facilities.
- Innovations like **DemClinic** provide:
 - Free memory screening, virtual assessments, and expert care.
 - Access to the **National Dementia Support Line (8585 990 990)**.

RISING PREVALENCE

■ 7.4% people aged 60 and above in India affected by dementia

■ Number expected to surge from current 8.8 million to 17 million by 2036, a 97% jump

■ Early onset of dementia affecting individuals in their 30s to 50s

■ **Key contributors:** Genetics, lifestyle factors, and comorbidities like diabetes and hypertension

Source: Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India



Challenges in Dementia Care

- Uneven distribution of care facilities and lack of infrastructure.
- Shortage of trained professionals and dementia care experts.

Health Implications and Prevention

- **Complications if unmanaged:**
 - Total memory loss, loss of independence, malnutrition, infections, and immobility.



- Risk of aspiration pneumonia, blood clots, and eventual mortality.
- **Preventive measures:**
 - Early detection.
 - Cognitive therapies.
 - Lifestyle changes (active lifestyle, balanced diet, stress management, adequate sleep).

Expert Insights

- **Dr. Ramani Sundaram:** Age is the leading factor for neurodegenerative diseases; highlights awareness needs for early-onset cases.
- **Dr. Vivek Kumar:** Risk doubles every five years after 65.
- **Dr. Suhas V P:** Discusses cost variability and advanced treatments.
- **Dr. Prashant Makhija:** Treatment includes medications, cognitive therapies, and advanced care.
- **Dr. Vivek Barun:** Emphasizes early detection to slow disease progression and mitigate complications.

Future Implications

- By 2050, India's elderly population (60+ years) will reach **319 million**, accounting for nearly **20% of the population** and **15.4% of the global elderly population**.
- Increased awareness, early interventions, and infrastructural development are crucial to managing the growing dementia burden.

Source: https://www.business-standard.com/health/india-s-ageing-population-at-high-risk-of-dementia-cases-to-double-by-2030-124121900852_1.html