



NEWSLETTER

April 2011

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Editorial

I am delighted that we can report this month that the Swiss



Parliament has brought the possibility of a national dementia plan one step closer to a reality. As with other countries who have taken this step, the national Alzheimer association has played a key role in instigating this development.

In 1984, the first criteria and guidelines for Alzheimer's disease were published. Our understanding of the disease has grown tremendously since then and the US National Institute on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association have, in April, published updated guidelines. Amongst other things, these include the identification of mild cognitive impairment due to Alzheimer's disease, an expansion on the framework of the disease to include the preclinical stage and also recommendations for working toward the inclusion of biomarker benchmarks to the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease in the different stages. Hopefully the result will be that more people receive an early diagnosis and therefore be in a position to benefit from the treatment and support available.

It has been very exciting in this context to analyse the data obtained from our public opinion survey in France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the US and which provides interesting insights into public perceptions regarding the value of an early diagnosis. A total of 2,678 adults participated in this unique survey and once the data analysis has been completed, we are hoping to launch the results during the upcoming International Conference on

Alzheimer's Disease (ICAD) in Paris in July.

In Germany, the regulatory agency for medicines has changed its earlier decision and now recommends that memantine be considered as a cost-effective drug in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. This is a very welcome step for people in Germany with dementia who may benefit from having access to this treatment and follows closely on a similar reversal in the position of NICE in the United Kingdom.

This month, we also report on two studies in which new gene variants have been identified which may be associated with Alzheimer's disease. These studies may help researchers understand more how the disease develops and lead to new treatments.

We are always keen at Alzheimer Europe to share information we have and I am very happy that in April we were able to include the contents of the 2009 Dementia in Yearbook on the Policy section of our website. The 2009 Yearbook was dedicated to healthcare and decision-making in dementia and I truly hope that you find the information easy to find and use.

The preparations for the next edition of our Dementia in Europe Magazine are also progressing well.

The call for abstracts for the 21st Alzheimer Europe Conference in Warsaw closed on 30 April 2011 and, as in previous years, we were able to collect over 100 abstracts. These will now be evaluated by our Programme Committee, but I can already assure everyone that we will have an interesting and varied programme. Don't forget to register for what promises to be another great conference.

Jean Georges
Executive Director

European Alzheimer's Alliance

Currently, the total number of MEPs in the Alliance stands at 50, representing 17 Member States of the European Union and all of the seven political groups in the European Parliament. Alzheimer Europe would like to thank the following MEPs for their continued support of the European Alzheimer's Alliance.

Belgium: Brepoels Frieda (Greens/EFA), Ries Frédérique (ALDE), Staes Bart (Greens/EFA), Sterckx Dirk (ALDE), **Bulgaria:** Parvanova Antonia (ALDE), Cyprus: Triantaphyllides Kyriacos (GUE-NGL), **Czech Republic:** Cabrnock Milan (ECR), Kohlíček Jaromír (GUE/NGL), Roithova Zuzana (EPP), **Denmark:** Schaldemose Christel (S&D), **Finland:** Jaakonsaari Liisa (S&D), Jäättänen Anneli (ALDE), Pietikäinen Sirpa (EPP), **France:** Audy Jean-Pierre (EPP), De Veyrac Christine (EPP), Griesbeck Nathalie (ALDE), Grossetête Françoise (EPP), Morin-Chartier Elisabeth (EPP), **Germany:** Niebler Angelika (EPP), Roth-Behrendt Dagmar (S&D), Ulmer Thomas (EPP), Weisgerber Anja (EPP), **Greece:** Chountis Nikolaos (GUE-NGL), Koppa Maria Eleni (S&D), Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou Rodi (EPP), **Ireland:** Aylward Liam (ALDE), Childers Nessa (S&D); Crowley Brian (ALDE), McGuinness Mairead (EPP), Mitchell Gay (EPP), **Italy:** Panzeri Pier Antonio (S&D), Toia Patrizia (S&D), **Luxembourg:** Lulling Astrid (EPP), **Netherlands:** De Lange Esther (EPP), van Nistelrooij Lambert (EPP), Wortmann-Kool Corien (EPP), **Portugal:** Coelho Carlos (EPP), Matias Marisa (GUE/NGL), **Romania:** Antonescu Elena Oana (EPP), **Slovakia:** Mikolasik Miroslav (EPP), Zaborska Anna (EPP), **United Kingdom:** Hall Fiona (ALDE), Lynne Liz (ALDE), McAvan Linda (S&D), Moraes Claude (S&D), Simpson Brian (S&D), Taylor Keith (Greens/EFA), Watson Graham (ALDE), Willmott Glenis (S&D), Yannakoudakis Marina (ECR).

Alzheimer Europe

In this section, we report on our current news, including our projects and events.

15 April 2011: Presentation made about Alzheimer Europe's work in the field of ethics and dementia

The Vice-Chairperson of Alzheimer Europe and Chairperson of the Czech Alzheimer Society, Iva Holmerová, presented Alzheimer Europe's work in the field of ethics at the VII European International Congress Healthy and Active Ageing for all Europeans 'II'. The event was held in Bologna, Italy, during April and organised by the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG).

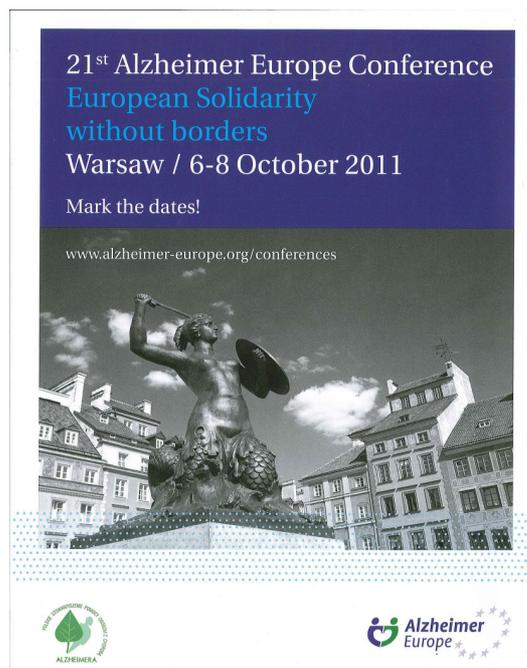
During the presentation, entitled "Ethical aspects in the care of patients with dementia", Ms Holmerová highlighted the fact that ethical issues have, since the organisation's inception in 1990, played an important part of Alzheimer Europe's activities. As well as facilitating and encouraging communication with key stakeholders, Alzheimer Europe's commitment to raising awareness of ethical issues for people with dementia has resulted in various works and/or projects including the:

- Recommendation on the use of restraints (2000)
- Survey on the opinions of member organisations with regard to the disclosure of diagnosis to a person with dementia (2003)
- Position on advance directives (2004)
- Report on end of life care for people with dementia (2008)
- Dementia in Europe Yearbook (2009) dedicated to healthcare and decision making in dementia and the
- Dementia Ethics Network (2009) and report on the ethical issues linked to the use of assistive technology in dementia care (2010).

Ms Holmerová also talked about the new ethical problems which are emerging alongside overall societal changes, growing cultural diversity, clinical trials, new drugs and advances in diagnosis.

30 April 2011: 2009 Dementia in Europe Yearbook published on line

The 2009 Dementia in Europe Yearbook, dedicated to present national laws with regard to healthcare and decision-making in dementia, has been published on the Alzheimer Europe website. Issues such as consent, the use of advance directives, access to diagnosis and information and end of life are addressed and presented under each of the 31 participating countries [Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia,



21st Alzheimer Europe Conference
European Solidarity
without borders
Warsaw / 6-8 October 2011
Mark the dates!
www.alzheimer-europe.org/conferences

The poster features a central image of a statue of a woman holding a staff and a basket, set against a background of European architecture. The Alzheimer Europe logo is visible in the bottom left corner.

Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom (England and Scotland)].

The 2009 Dementia in Europe Yearbook can be found on the 'policy in practice' section of the Alzheimer Europe website, under country

comparisons. The 2009 Yearbook is also available in book form (cost EUR 10 plus EUR 8 postage and package, 270 pages) and can be ordered from the publication section of the Alzheimer Europe website.

Alzheimer Europe Networking 2011

On 1 April (London, UK) Jean attended the GSK Health Advisory Board.

On 7 April (Brussels, Belgium) Annette attended the EFPIA Think Tank meeting.

On 12-13 April (Brussels, Belgium) Annette attended the EPF General Assembly Meeting and spring seminar on Capacity Building.

On 13 April 2011 (Luxembourg, Luxembourg), Jean met with researchers from the University of Nancy, France for a project on the involvement of patient organisations in the Open Method of Coordination

On 14-15 April (Vienna, Austria) Dianne attended the 4th annual meeting of the fundamental rights platform.

From 14 to 17 April 2011 (Bologna, Italy), Iva Holmerová attended the conference of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, European Region.

European developments

Here we report on developments from the European institutions and organisations which may impact people with dementia and/or their carers.

5 April 2011: Fundamental rights meeting held in Vienna

The 4th Annual meeting fundamental rights platform was held in Vienna, Austria in April. It was organised by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Alzheimer Europe was represented by Dianne Gove, Alzheimer Europe's Information Officer.

On the first day of the meeting, Dianne attended two workshops on the topic of strategic litigation. This was described as a method of awareness raising in which the whole process is geared towards raising awareness of discrimination. Whilst the aim is clearly to win the case, losing it can still, if managed properly, contribute positively towards raising awareness of specific issues. The "talking tables" lunch permitted participants to exchange ideas with experts and other participants on a range of issues including human rights and the rights of people with disabilities.

The second day of the meeting was dedicated to the explaining the importance of the EU ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Johan ten Geuzendam, Head of the Unit Rights of Persons with Disabilities, DG Justice, European Commission pointed out that this was the first European Convention that the European Union had ratified itself and that one of the consequences of this ratification was that it would now be possible to enforce compliance with the provisions of the Convention on those Member States which had already ratified it.

7 April 2011: The European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations holds think tank meeting

The European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) held its regular Think Tank with patient organisations on 7 April. The

revision of Directive 89/105/EEC relating to the transparency of measures regulating the pricing of medicinal products was presented by Laura Nistor from DG Enterprise. Other topics discussed were the Clinical Trials Directive that the Commission will review and the Water Framework Directive that may lead to the removal of some pharmaceutical products from the market. An update of the pharmaceutical package was made. A further update was given on the revised text of the EFPIA Patient Organisation code : the list of the patient organisations who receive financial, non-financial or indirect financial support from industry is currently made publicly available by companies. In the draft revised text, companies will have to also disclose the monetary value of the financial support as well as the invoiced costs (agencies, meetings...), for the first time by the end of first quarter 2013, covering activities started from 1 January 2012 onwards.

Alzheimer Europe was represented by Annette Dumas, Public Affairs Officer.

11 April 2011: European citizens' organisations organise conference to discuss conditions of citizens in the health care services of Europe

The Active Citizenship Network (ACN) organised the European Conference of the 5th European Patients' Rights Day to bring together different health stakeholders to discuss the real conditions of citizens in the health care services in Europe on 11 and 12 April 2011.

Health Commission John Dalli gave a speech to highlight the different initiatives taken by the Commission to enhance patients' rights (pharmacovigilance, counterfeit medicines, cross-border healthcare, information to patients). Other speakers representing patients [(European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) and the European Patients' Forum (EPF)], nurses [European Federation of Nurses (EFN)] and the hospitals [European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE)] respectively gave their views on the value of patient involvement, the challenges that lie ahead for the professionals and discussed ACN patients charter. Annette Dumas, Public Affairs Officer, attended on behalf of Alzheimer Europe.

12-13 April 2011: European Patients' Forum (EPF) organises discussion groups for patient groups

After its General Assembly Meeting on 12 April 2011, the EPF organised a working dinner to enable patient leaders to work with each other, discuss common issues, potential future collaboration through joint projects or policy work. Different discussion groups were organised: youth strategy, involving young patients in EPF; building your organisation membership through networking; sharing project ideas; capacity building.

On 13 April the EPF organised a spring seminar on capacity building. Several parallel sessions were organised: patient involvement in health technology assessment (HTA), patient involvement in cohesion policy, information and communication technologies (ICT)/e-health, patient involvement in research and innovation, cross-border healthcare, direct patient reporting and a vision for the next EU public health framework programme.

Alzheimer Europe was represented at both events by Annette Dumas, Public Affairs Officer.

We provide full references to articles on our website. Please visit the Alzheimer Europe website on:

www.alzheimer-europe.org

Policy watch

14 April 2011: Swiss Parliament votes unanimously to develop a national dementia plan

In Switzerland, two motions on the need for a dementia plan have been unanimously accepted by the Conseil national. The next stage is for the second chamber (Conseil des États) to vote on the motions. Should they be accepted, the government will have to develop a national Alzheimer's plan.

The Swiss Alzheimer Association has played a pivotal role in these developments, most notably by generating over 34,000 signatures to their dementia manifesto and by contacting members of Parliament directly.

26 April 2011: German agency changes decision on cost-effectiveness of Alzheimer's disease drug

The German healthcare cost-effective agency, IQWiG, has updated its guideline on cost-effectiveness of the drug memantine (which is used to treat the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease), saying that it does provide a benefit. This contrasts with its earlier recommendation in 2009, when the agency recommended that memantine should no longer be reimbursed by health insurers. This change was as a result of the manufacturer, Merz, providing additional data.

A similar decision was made in Britain earlier this year by the agency National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), which also updated its 2007 guidelines to now include the recommendation

that memantine be available on prescription in the UK.

Members' News

In this section we report on our members' latest initiatives and work.

2 April 2011: Alicja Sadowska re-elected as chairperson of the Polish Alzheimer Association



The Board of the Polish Alzheimer Association re-elected Alicja Sadowska as the Chairperson of the Association for a term of three years. Ms Sadowska is also a member of the board of Alzheimer Europe.

15 April 2011: Education programme for children launched by the Athens Alzheimer's Association

"Learning about Alzheimer's disease" is an education programme which is designed to teach children aged 7 to 11 about Alzheimer's disease and show them how to have fun with grandparents with memory loss.



The 90-minute programme includes story-telling, puzzles and various other interactive activities which help children to learn basic information about the symptoms and

progression of Alzheimer's disease. It also provides answers to potential questions. Additionally, the children learn that feelings of sadness, fear or even anger are absolutely normal reactions to the problem. Most of all, the children realise that there are many things they can do to have fun with their grandparent who has Alzheimer's disease. The programme offers some simple tips to help them to communicate more easily with the person who has dementia.



To date, the programme has been presented in more than 20 elementary schools and libraries in Athens. The children (and their teachers), who have participated in this programme have responded enthusiastically.

The programme was created by the Athens Alzheimer's Association and approved by the National Book Centre of Greece and is based on the book "Why doesn't my grandmother remember my name?" (by Olga Lymperopoulou and published by the Athens Alzheimer's Association).

15 April 2011: Alzheimer associations in Bulgaria host round table meeting on the socio-economic rights of people with dementia and their carers

In Varna, Bulgaria, a round table meeting on the socio-economic rights of people with dementia and their carers was organised by Alzheimer Bulgaria, with the support of Compassion Alzheimer Foundation on 15 April 2011. The



meeting was organised within the framework of an advocacy campaign on socio-economic rights and Alzheimer's disease called "There is no time to lose".



Dr Antonia Parvanova, MEP (Bulgaria) and member of the European Alzheimer's Alliance, supported the event by making a presentation on European policy on Alzheimer's disease. Presentations were also made on the existing policies and measures in Bulgaria for support of people affected by dementia. A documentary on Alzheimer's disease was shared with participants. During the meeting the following issues were discussed:

- problems of the families of people with Alzheimer's disease
- the lack of reimbursement for medication
- the lack of support for the families by the social services
- the lack of a national plan on the political level for addressing the problem.

19 April 2011: New information published on German Alzheimer Society publishes information on stress and carers of people with dementia



The German Alzheimer Society has published information on the issue of stress and carers of people with dementia. It highlights that stress is both a major concern and a constant companion for carers of people with dementia whether home or in a residential care setting. Left unchecked, stress for carers can become overwhelming and may result in abuse and neglect of the person with dementia. Ways in which stress can be addressed and managed are suggested.

The German Alzheimer's Society publication is entitled "Alzheimer Info 1/2011: Stress in the care of people with dementia". The Alzheimer's Info is published four times a year and costs EUR 3 (including postage).

27 April 2011: Alzheimer Scotland prevalence figures updated



Alzheimer Scotland has announced its updated dementia prevalence statistics, amending its previous figure of 72,500 to 82,500 people with dementia in Scotland. The figure will double within a generation.

Henry Simmons, Chief Executive of Alzheimer Scotland, states "The majority of the increase can be attributed to a more accurate measuring of dementia among the oldest old (those aged 90 and up), particularly women. So, while a recent announcement from the Department of Work and Pensions that one in six of the UK population can expect to reach the age of 100 is to be welcomed, we should also consider that up to half of those people will (by current trends) have some form of dementia. How will Scotland cope with that?"

"In our most recent public opinion survey, one in four of those questioned said that a political party's policies on dementia would influence their vote. Yet only two of Scotland's main parties, the SNP and Scottish Labour, make direct reference to dementia in their manifestos. We are surprised that dementia is so under-represented in the political debate surrounding the forthcoming Scottish election, as it is the biggest public health issue currently facing the country. We have an immense challenge if we are to continue to tackle the key issues of dementia support and care across Scotland".

The source of the updated figures is Alzheimer Europe's European Collaboration in Dementia Project (EuroCoDe) 2008.

30 April 2011: Alzheimer Portugal and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation develop a pilot project of Art for people with dementia



Alzheimer Portugal and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation have developed a pilot project in the area of dementia. The ultimate goal is to make art accessible to people with Alzheimer's disease, providing them moments of cognitive stimulation and well-being.

The pilot project is being tested on eight people with dementia of the Day Centre and Home Care of Alzheimer Portugal. It is hoped that, in the near future, this activity can be extended to more people with dementia and their carers.



"This is the first project conceived in Portugal, which aims to enable people with Alzheimer's disease to engage with art. An innovative approach with which we not only intend to provide a good time and stimulation activities to people with dementia and their carers, but also show that there are enjoyable activities that can be developed with people with dementia.", says Antonio Oliveira Costa, Executive Director of Alzheimer Portugal. "Somehow, it is also the replication of some international practices, which have shown good results, and it is now possible due to the commitment of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and, in particular the Museum of Classical Art."



The involvement with art may have significant benefits for people with dementia and their caregivers, whether this experience may include observing and discussing art or create it. In both cases, art may be used as a vehicle for meaningful self-expression. The involvement with art, through careful observation and through discussion, provides the person with dementia an opportunity to:

- explore and exchange ideas about art and artists;
- experience intellectual stimulation;
- make connections between their personal stories and the world;

- access to personal experiences and long-term memory;
- participate in a meaningful activity that promotes personal growth.

Carers also benefit from the experience of art to explore their own interests, while people with Alzheimer's disease are present, secure and involved. Thus, their relationships can be improved, since the art programs provide unique opportunities for communication and connection.

This is a "pilot program", that Alzheimer Portugal aims to continually improve, so that in future a specialised activity for people with dementia can be created, offering the greatest possible benefits, thus contributing to social participation and socialization, enhanced self-esteem and, ultimately, an improved quality of life.

30 April 2011: The Greek Association of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders collaborates with the National Theatre of Northern Greece – "In-house theatre"



The Greek Association of Alzheimer's Disease, within its efforts to improve people with dementia and their and caregivers' quality of life, is collaborating with the National

Theatre of Northern Greece (NTNG), offering "in-house" theatrical performances.

A series of visits to houses of people with dementia has been organised by the Association's home care team and by the actors of NTNG, who will be visiting patients in their homes and keep them company while reading to them theatrical texts, monologues, fairy tales etc. The visits last about 45 minutes and the feedback from the first patients and their families was really exciting. The first patient – an 80 year old woman - had the chance to make a trip down memory lane, back to her childhood through the mini theatrical performance that was held in her home.

Research has proved that art combats depression, boosts brain functioning and makes patients more social. The Greek Association is including art in its activities, using it for educational programmes targeted at people with dementia but also in a manner that enhances their quality of life.

The Greek Association has been monitoring the social activities of the NTNG and thought that this joint event would prove an excellent opportunity to offer to patients and their families a unique experience.

Science Watch

This section has highlights of the most recent published research on dementia, including research on the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of the disease.

30 March 2011: Animal study examines light treatment and Alzheimer's disease

A flexible patch has been developed which may potentially be used to treat Alzheimer's disease in a

non-invasive way. Researchers wanted to address that it may be the reduced cerebral blood flow in the brain which may be the first step in the pathologic evolution of the disease so investigated how to produce nitric oxide - "well-known vasodilator and neurotransmitter capable of increasing blood flow, reducing inflammation and triggering gene expression changes in the brain." The patch they developed works by emitting light through the skin and this leads to nitric oxide being produced.

The patch has been developed by Claimedix Inc and was presented during the International Conference of the Alzheimer's disease/Parkinson's disease Conference in Barcelona in March 2011.

3 April 2011: Study highlights potential of insulin as therapy for some symptoms of Alzheimer's disease

A study on people with diabetes suggests that administering low-dose insulin may suppress the activity of a protein linked with beta amyloid (which is associated with Alzheimer's disease). Researchers hoped this may lead to a potential treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

The study author was Paresh Dandona, Buffalo University and was published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism.

We provide full references to articles on our website. Please visit the Alzheimer Europe website on:

www.alzheimer-europe.org

3 April 2011: Studies identify gene variants as possible risk factors for Alzheimer's disease



Previous studies had identified the gene variants APOE-e4, CR1, CLU and PICALM as possible risk factors for late on-set Alzheimer's disease but two new studies have identified additional gene variants which may be risk factors for Alzheimer's disease. The studies were part of the genome-wide association study (GWAS) in which DNA samples were studied from more than 56,000 study participants. The first study identified a fifth gene variant, BIN 1 and also EPHA 1, MS4A, CD2AP and CD33. A second team analysing the GWAS findings found the same genes as risk factors but also identified an additional gene known as ABCA7 which may be a risk factor.

The first study was coordinated by the Alzheimer's Disease Genetics Consortium (ADGC) and led by Gerard Schellenberg, professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia, USA. Researchers from 44 other universities and research institutes in the USA participated. It was funded by the National Institute of Health, USA.

The second team was led by Julie Williams, Cardiff University School of Medicine, Wales and included investigators from the USA and Europe (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain and the UK).

6 April 2011: Study examines role of protein receptor in Alzheimer's disease

A study indicates that the integral membrane protein known as Cluster of differentiation 36 (CD 36) limits blood flow to the brain during Alzheimer's disease but that when CD 36 was disabled blood vessels were able to function again, supplying nutrition to neurons affected by Alzheimer's disease. The researchers suggested that CD36 could be a target for preventing some of the neuronal dysfunction in Alzheimer's disease.

The study, led by Dr Costantino Iadecola, the George C. Cotzias Distinguished Professor of Neurology and Neuroscience at Weill Cornell Medical College and a neurologist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, USA, was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

8 April 2011: Mouse study examines the effect of vehicle pollution on the brain



A mouse study suggests that short-term exposure to vehicle pollution may result changes in the brain including:

- Damage to neurons involved in learning and memory
- Signs of inflammation in the brain associated with premature ageing and Alzheimer's disease

The study found that the toxin results from a mix of tiny particles from the burning of fossil fuel and weathering car parts and pavement.

The study was reported on the medical news today website.

8 April 2011: Study examines the role of stress hormone in memory impairment

A mouse study has found that high levels of the stress hormone cortisol in aged mice resulted in their being less able to remember how to navigate a maze. The researchers found that "one stress hormone receptor was activated by low levels of cortisol which helped memory, however, when the levels of the stress hormone were too high they spilled over onto a second receptor and this activated brain processes that contribute to memory impairment."

The study was carried out by researchers at the University of Edinburgh and published in Journal of Neuroscience.

12 April 2011: Study examines the effect of exercise on blood flow through the brain



A three month study of 16 women aged 60 and older suggests that brisk walking for 30.50 minutes three times or four times per week improved blood flow through the brain as much as 15%. Researchers

believe this finding may be of importance when treating people with Alzheimer's disease as, amongst other things, a healthy flow of blood to the brain

"washes away brain metabolic wastes such as amyloid-beta protein" which is associated with Alzheimer's disease. The researchers will now try to establish whether the increased blood flow improves learning and reasoning.

Led by Rong Zhang, researchers from the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital's institute for Exercise and Environmental Medicine, Dallas, USA, carried out the study, which was presented at the Experimental Biology meeting in Washington, DC, in April.

13 April 2011: Study identifies potential biomarker for Alzheimer's disease

A study which monitored specific areas of the brain (the cortical regions) in known to be affected in Alzheimer's disease over an 11 year period found that "subtle but reliable atrophy is identifiable in asymptomatic individuals nearly a decade before dementia". The researchers concluded that Alzheimer's disease related cortical thinning could potentially be used as a biomarker to detect abnormalities "consistent with Alzheimer's disease in cognitively normal adults who develop Alzheimer's disease after follow-up".

The research was conducted by BC Dickerson and colleagues from the General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Rush University Medical Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital and the John Hopkins University School of Medicine, USA. It was published in the journal Neurology.

19 April 2011: New criteria and guidelines for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease published

A paper (consisting of three articles) on the National Institute on Aging/Alzheimer's Association Diagnostic Guidelines for Alzheimer's disease has been published online by Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association. The Alzheimer Association Research Center website states that criteria and guidelines include the following key elements:

- An update of the 1984 diagnostic criteria for dementia due to Alzheimer's disease.
- A refinement to the existing guidelines for diagnosing mild cognitive impairment (MCI). This includes the guideline to identify MCI due to Alzheimer's disease and defines four levels of certainty for arriving at this diagnosis.
- An expansion of the conceptual framework for thinking about Alzheimer's disease to include a "preclinical" stage characterised by signature biological changes (biomarkers) that occur years before any disruptions in memory, thinking or behaviour can be detected. The biomarkers are not yet specified but a research agenda that builds on preliminary data is proposed.
- The establishment of a framework for eventually adding biomarker benchmarks to the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease in all of its stages. Included in the guidelines is a proposal for a research agenda to increase diagnostic certainty by

incorporating biomarkers into the diagnosis.

Creighton Phelps, Ph.D., Program Director of the Alzheimer's Disease Centres Program at the National Institutes of Health said "The new guidelines reflect today's understanding of how key changes in the brain lead to Alzheimer's disease pathology and how they relate to the clinical signs of mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease dementia. We are also beginning to be able to detect these changes at a preclinical stage, long before symptoms appear in many people. With further research on biomarkers, as set forth in the new guidelines, we may ultimately be able to predict who is at risk for development of mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's dementia, and who would benefit most as interventions are developed."

The "New Criteria and Guidelines for Alzheimer's Disease Diagnosis" consist of four papers:

- Introduction to the recommendations from the National Institute on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association workgroup on diagnostic guidelines for Alzheimer's disease.
- The diagnosis of dementia due to Alzheimer's disease: Recommendations from the National Institute on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association workgroup.
- The diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment due to Alzheimer's disease: Recommendations from the National Institute on Aging and Alzheimer's Association workgroup.
- Toward defining the preclinical stages of Alzheimer's disease: Recommendations from the National Institute on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association workgroup.

In addition to the above articles, the results of deliberations from a workgroup set up to examine the post-mortem, pathological criteria for Alzheimer's disease will be available in late 2011.

This publication incorporates comments received last year on the preliminary recommendations which were made during the Alzheimer's Association International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease (AAICAD) in July 2010 and it will be available in hard copy in the May 2011 issue of the journal Alzheimer's & Dementia: the Journal of the Alzheimer's Association.

26 April 2011: Study investigates relationship between never leaving home environment and onset of Alzheimer's disease

A study suggests that people who never leave their home environment may be more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease. Further studies are required to examine other potential contributory factors and the researchers said that their findings may reinforce earlier findings that physical activity, intellectual engagement and social stimulation are important to delaying cognitive decline.

The study was led by Bryan D James, Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center, Chicago and published in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry.

27 April 2011: Mouse study examines the effect of a tobacco compound on the symptoms of Alzheimer disease

A mouse study suggests that a compound (cotinine) which is derived from tobacco may reduce plaques associated with dementia and prevent memory loss. The study was conducted over a five-month period and the genetically modified mice which were treated with the compound showed identical performance levels to normal mice in spatial memory tests and a reduction in the amyloid plaques deposits in the brain.

The study was carried out by researchers at Bay Pines VA Healthcare System and the University of South Florida, University of Miami, USA, University of Manchester, UK, and the Saitama Medical Center and Saitama Medical University, Japan. It was published in the Journal of Alzheimer's disease.

30 April 2011: Study examines the effect of lithium treatment on people with mild cognitive impairment

Researchers explored the effect of long-term lithium treatment (in terms of cognitive and biological outcomes) on people with amnesic mild cognitive impairment (aMCI). Their findings suggest that "lithium has disease-modifying properties with potential clinical implications in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease". Researchers hope that further investigations can be carried out to see if lithium can be used to protect people at risk of Alzheimer's disease and to slow down the progression of memory loss to dementia.

The research was led by Dr Orestes Forlenza, Faculty of Medicine, University of São Paulo, Brazil and published in the British Journal of Psychiatry.

Dementia in society

In this section we report on how dementia is portrayed by the general media (for example, on television and in films).

19 April 2011: Competitions launched in Germany

Two competitions have been launched in Germany:

- The Hertie Foundation grants in 2011 (amounting to EUR 25,000) have been announced. The award is given for commitment and self-help in the areas of multiple sclerosis and neurodegenerative diseases (including Alzheimer's disease). The closing date is 15 May 2011 and the award ceremony will take place later in the year.
- A call for creative written contributions (short stories, novels, essays, fairy tales and poems) which deal with the self-determination of people with disabilities or mental illness has been launched for the Caritas disability literary contest "Overcoming barriers". The texts must be

easily understood and submitted before 30 June 2011.

New resources and publications

By reporting on recently published books, reports and information videos on dementia we hope to offer updates on the current resources available to anyone who is affected by dementia.

30 March 2011: Asian DVD on dementia launched

Meri Yaadain (my memories) is an educational DVD which has been launched in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu (with English subtitles). It shares the life stories of carers of people with dementia and their loved ones. The Meri Yaadain Dementia Project was "set up three years ago to look at the growing needs of South Asian older people suffering from dementia. The project works with older people and their carers through a variety of means which include home visits, a newsletter, a monthly support group, leaflets, radio programmes and workshops."

For more information please contact the Meri Yaadain Dementia Team, Communications, Bradford Council, 5th Floor, Olicana House, Chapel Street, Little Germany, Bradford, BD1 5RE, UK or e mail: akhlak.rauf@bradford.gov.uk

We provide full references to articles on our website. Please visit the Alzheimer Europe website on:

www.alzheimer-europe.org

19 April 2011: Presentations from German conference published

The presentations from the German Alzheimer Society Congress held in October 2010 have been published in printed and also CD format. The programme may be interesting for those people

wishing to gain an overview of the many activities surround the topic of dementia in Germany, or for new project ideas. The presentations contain the texts of 80 lectures on 25 topics including:

1. How to support people with dementia and their families
2. Involving people with dementia and carers in the community
3. Current state of diagnosis and treatment
4. Non-pharmacological interventions
5. Particular changes of fronto-temporal dementia
6. Incidence of dementia in people with Down syndrome
7. Legal issues surrounding activities such as driving with dementia or migrant carers.

The conference handbook "Community living" costs EUR 10, has 544 pages and includes a CD-ROM (the CD-ROM may be purchased separately for EUR 6). Both can be obtained from the German Alzheimer Society.

30 April 2011: New Interdem website launched

A new website of Interdem (a pan-European network of researchers on early detection and psycho-social interventions in dementia) has been launched. The website, found at www.interdem.org has information on the network itself, projects carried out, publications and it also has a members' portal. The new website also includes information on:

- A new article on the Interdem manifesto which was published in Ageing and Mental Health
- Lectures from the International Association on Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) conference
- The Chairperson of Interdem, Myrra Vernooij-Dassen, being awarded Dutch royal honour in recognition of her work in the field of dementia.

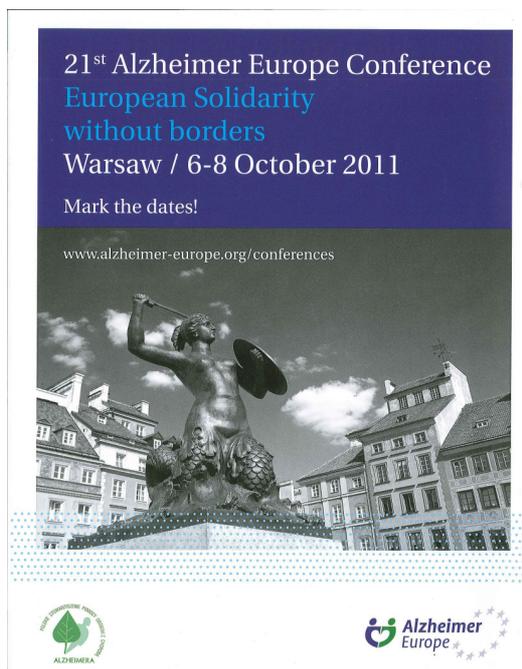
AE Calendar

The following meetings will be attended by representatives of Alzheimer Europe

Date	Meeting	AE Representative
3 May 2011	Mental Health Interest Group meeting (European Parliament) on stigma and depression, (Brussels, Belgium)	Annette
5 May 2011	Meeting with Parliament Magazine, (Brussels, Belgium)	Annette
6 May 2011	Meeting with France Alzheimer (Paris, France)	Annette
9-10 May 2011	Visit of Novotel Warsaw in preparation of the 21 st AE conference (Warsaw, Poland)	Gwladys
11 May 2011	Workshop on "Communicating on dementia through Europe" (Stirling, United Kingdom)	Jean
18-21 May 2011	European Association of Palliative Care conference (Lisbon, Portugal)	Dianne
20 May 2011	WeDo project meeting (Age Platform EU) (Brussels, Belgium)	Annette
25-26 May 2011	Meeting with representatives of the Joint Action on Dementia (Luxembourg, Luxembourg)	Jean
26 May 2011	JPNP Patient Stakeholders meeting (Brussels, Belgium)	Annette

Future Conferences

Date	Meeting	Place
13-15 June 2011	14th Kuopio Bio-NMR Workshop: MRI of stroke, epilepsy and neurodegenerative diseases and the PredictAD Workshop, http://www.uef.fi/predictad-ws	Kuopio, Finland
22 June 2011	Arts and Dementia: Promoting quality of life of people with dementia and their carers through the creative arts, www.eminence-grise.co.uk	Oxford, UK
1-4 September 2011	Joint Conference on Ageing and Neuro-degeneration presented by the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE) and the Max Planck Institute for Biology of Ageing (MPI), www.conference-ageing-neurodegeneration.de	Bergisch Gladbach, Germany
10-13 September 2011	15 th Congress of the European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS), www.efns.org/efns2011	Budapest, Hungary
6-8 October 2011	Alzheimer Europe's 21 st Annual Conference "European Solidarity without borders", http://www.alzheimer-europe.org/EN/Conferences/Warsaw-2011	Warsaw, Poland
20-23 October 2011	7 th International Congress on vascular dementia: Facing the challenges of dementia, http://www.cts.vresp.com/c/?KenesInternationalVA/e06f64a56d/5ba2f9d3c6/0d0ca1445f/ref5=db1	Riga, Latvia
2-4 November 2011	38 th Congress of European Association of Geriatric Psychiatry (EAGP), www.apgerontopsiquiatria.com	Porto, Portugal
8-11 November 2011	Thailand dementia 2011 and 14 th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of ADI, www.azthaimeting.com	Bankok, Thailand
9-12 May 2012	12th International Stockholm/Springfield Symposium on Advances in Alzheimer Therapy, www.ad-springfield.com	Stockholm, Sweden



21st Alzheimer Europe Conference
 European Solidarity
 without borders
 Warsaw / 6-8 October 2011
 Mark the dates!
www.alzheimer-europe.org/conferences

The poster features a central image of a statue in a city square, with the Alzheimer Europe logo at the bottom right and a smaller logo at the bottom left.



The Alzheimer Europe newsletter arises from the 2011 Work Plan of Alzheimer Europe, which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme.