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Subject: Public Health E-News: Modifying Behavior Reduces the Risk of Cognitive Decline

Review of Evidence Confirms Potential of Risk Reduction for Cognitive Decline

Participating in regular physical activity and managing certain cardiovascular risk factors (smoking, hypertension, diabetes, and obesity) reduces the risk of cognitive decline, according to an [evidence review](#) by the Alzheimer's Association published in *Alzheimer's & Dementia* earlier this month. This review adds to the growing scientific consensus, including a recent [Institute of Medicine report](#), that modifying certain behaviors can protect cognition and support brain health.

Based on an examination of the current state of the science, the analysis concludes there is sufficiently strong evidence, from a population perspective, to link physical activity and management of certain cardiovascular risk factors to a reduced risk of cognitive decline. The report notes that a healthy diet and engaging in lifelong learning may also reduce the risk (see image at right).

To date, the only risk factors conclusively associated with dementia, according to the report, are formal education (more of it reduces the risk) and moderate to severe traumatic brain injury (it increases the risk). However, physical activity and cardiovascular risk management

AAIC 2015

The Alzheimer's Association International

Conference (AAIC) will be held July 18-23, 2015, in Washington, DC. As the world's largest forum for dementia research, AAIC will bring together investigators, clinicians, students, and care providers from over 70 countries to share the latest findings, theories, and discoveries in dementia science. [Registration](#) is open and an [online program](#) of conference presentations and posters is available.

The Road Map

The CDC Healthy Aging Program and the Alzheimer's Association

partnered to develop an updated Road Map for the public health community to address cognitive health, Alzheimer's disease, and the needs of caregivers through 35 actions.

Public Health Agenda

may also reduce the risk of developing dementia.

The authors call for expanding efforts to raise awareness and educate the public on ways to decrease their risk of cognitive decline, including by governments. The *Public Health Road Map*, a guidebook for public health officials to promote cognitive functioning – which was jointly developed by the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Aging Program* and the Alzheimer's Association – encourages disseminating evidence-based messages about risk reduction for preserving cognitive health (action item E-04). *Brain Health as You Age: You Can Make A Difference!*, from the *Administration for Community Living*, is one existing resource that public health professionals can use. You can also partner with your local *Alzheimer's Association chapter* to conduct workshops on ways individuals can care for their bodies and brains to age as well as possible.

Recent Webinars Feature Alzheimer's Disease, Public Health Interventions

Three recent webinars highlighted the intersection of public health and cognitive issues. Recordings are now available. For additional information, please contact John Shean (jshean@alz.org).

May 2015 – The *Association for State and Territorial Health Organizations (ASTHO)* held *Using Data for Action to Promote the Health of Older Adults*, discussing the connection between chronic disease and cognitive health and providing strategies for using data to shape public health programs and policies that promote older adults' health.

June 2015 – The Alzheimer's Association hosted *Public Health Implications of the IOM Report on Cognitive Aging*, discussing the recent Institute of Medicine report, *Cognitive Aging: Progress in Understanding and Opportunities for Action*, and highlighting actions for the public health community.

June 2015 – The *White House Conference on Aging* held a *webinar on Alzheimer's disease*, focused on cognitive health, federal efforts to promote healthy aging and address Alzheimer's disease, and tools that public health officials can use.

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The Alzheimer's Association has identified three key elements of an Alzheimer's public health agenda: surveillance, early detection, and promotion of brain health.

The 10 Warning Signs

The Know the 10 Signs campaign is a national education effort to increase awareness of the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease and the benefits of early detection and diagnosis.

Contact

For more information on the Healthy Brain Initiative, the public health agenda, or Alzheimer's disease in general, contact *Molly French* or check out alz.org/publichealth.



For additional information or questions, please contact jshean@alz.org.
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