

Memory decline may be earliest sign of dementia

July 17 2013, by Marilyn Marchione

(AP)—Memory problems that are often dismissed as a normal part of aging may not be so harmless after all.

Several research teams are reporting that noticing you have a decline in memory beyond the occasional misplaced car keys or forgotten name could be the very earliest sign of Alzheimer's.

One study found that complaining of a [memory decline](#) preceded wider mental impairment by about six years. Another tied those changes to evidence of dementia on brain scans.

The research involves [memory lapses](#) that are more pronounced than a mere "senior moment." These are bigger problems, such as getting lost while driving home.

The studies were discussed Wednesday at the Alzheimer's Association conference in Boston.

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