

AAIC: as baby boomers age, alzheimer's rates will soar

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(HealthDay)—The number of people with Alzheimer's disease is set to increase significantly in the United States due to the aging of the baby-boom generation, and the cost of caring for these patients will use up a large proportion of Medicare's budget, new research suggests. Findings from the study were scheduled to be presented Monday at annual Alzheimer's Association International Conference, held from July 18 to 23 in Washington, D.C.

More than 28 million [baby boomers](#) will develop Alzheimer's disease during the course of their lifetimes, the researchers estimated. By 2050,

all baby boomers will be older than 85 and half of those still alive will have developed Alzheimer's disease, lead author Lisa Alecxih, senior vice president of The Lewin Group and director of the Lewin Center for Aging and Disability Policy in Falls Church, Va., told *HealthDay*. That's up from an estimated 1.2 percent prevalence of Alzheimer's among boomers in 2020, when most boomers will be in their 60s and early 70s, Alecxih said.

Improvements in medical science are allowing people to live longer, but a long life is the main risk factor for developing Alzheimer's disease, she said. "The incidence of the disease increases as you grow older, as does the severity," Alecxih said. That means that by 2040, more than twice as many baby boomers will have Alzheimer's disease (10.3 million) compared with the equivalent age group in 2015 (4.7 million), the researchers said.

The cost of caring for more than 10 million Alzheimer's patients will consume nearly 25 percent of Medicare spending in 2040, the researchers predicted. In 2020, the projected Medicare costs of caring for baby boomers with Alzheimer's in the community will be about 2 percent of total Medicare spending, amounting to nearly \$12 billion in 2014 dollars. But by 2040, when the baby-boom generation is between 76 and 94 years old, projected Medicare costs increase to more than 24 percent of total Medicare spending, or about \$328 billion in 2014 dollars.

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