

Top researchers advocate united actions to fight Alzheimer's disease

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To meet the challenge of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, a concerted effort and long-term economic commitment is needed, according to a new expert report by internationally leading researchers in the field. The journal *Lancet Neurology* devotes its entire April issue to a detailed overview and recommendations about how patient care, as well as basic and clinical research on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias should be organised in the future. The report will be presented at a workshop hosted by the European Parliament in Brussels on March 15, during the Brain Awareness Week 2016

The comprehensive report is the work of the *Lancet Neurology* Commission led by Professor Bengt Winblad, Centre for Alzheimer Research at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden. This commission was initiated by Lancet editors and formed with the aim to provide expert recommendations and information to politicians and policy makers about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. More than 30 internationally leading researchers collaborated on the 78 pages long report, which identified a range of challenges that need to be addressed to reduce the burden of dementia.

"What we need now is for the politicians to realise that this is a growing problem that already costs society tremendous amounts of money", says Professor Bengt Winblad. "We need investments of resources in research in all areas involved in this disease, to find better drugs, but also to improve compassionate care and prevention."

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and accounts for approximately 60 percent of the cases. The most important risk factor is high age and as life expectancy increases, the number of persons with dementia is expected to rise. In 2015, almost 47 million persons around the world were estimated to be affected. By 2030, the number is expected to reach 75 million. By 2050, up to 131 million persons are expected to be burdened by the disease. So far no treatment is available that can effectively halt or reverse the disease.

The *Lancet Neurology* Commission report discusses health economics, epidemiology, prevention, genetics, biology, diagnosis, treatment, care and ethics. The commission advocates that public governmental agencies form large multinational partnerships with academic centres and pharmaceutical companies to deploy capital resources and share risk.

"To defeat Alzheimer's [disease](#) and other dementias, united actions are needed, not only within research, but also within the political arena on all levels", says Professor Winblad. "My hope is that our work will stimulate increased national and international collaboration."

More information: 'Defeating Alzheimer's disease and other dementias: a priority for European science and society', Bengt Winblad, Philippe Amouyel, Sandrine Andrieu et al, *Lancet Neurology*, 2016;15:455-532, published online 14 March 2016.

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