

Would you take a free predictive test for Alzheimer's disease?

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Three-quarters of people aged 65 and over in the US would take a test telling them they were going to develop Alzheimer's disease if such a test existed, according to research published in the open access journal *Alzheimer's Research and Therapy*.

When asked what they would do if they were told they were definitely going to develop Alzheimer's, 87% of the [study participants](#) said they would discuss [health plans](#) with loved ones and 81% indicated they would make plans for their future care and/or make a living will, even though only 15% reported that they had already done so.

Dr Meera Sheffrin, lead author from Stanford University School of Medicine in the US, said: "Our research confirms that there is a high level of public interest in predictive tests for Alzheimer's disease. This could be because Alzheimer's is often in the media and perceived as a particularly devastating disease. This interest, and the potential high demand for predictive testing, should be considered as these tests become available, so recourses are available to help counsel patients and prepare for the future."

The researchers analyzed the results of 875 people aged 65 and older (belonging to the Health and Retirement Study), and asked them the hypothetical question whether they would take a free and 100% accurate test to predict their future risk of Alzheimer's disease. Participants were then asked to rate their likelihood of completing [advance care planning](#) or a living-will if they knew they would develop Alzheimer's.

Participants' responses to the question were examined based on demographics and self-reported characteristics such as physical functioning, memory, health and risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Dr Sheffrin said: "We found that interest in a predictive test for Alzheimer's disease testing was similar amongst the participants regardless of whether or not they perceived themselves as being at high or low risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Unexpectedly, interest did not vary between individuals who were healthy and those suffering from many medical conditions, or by sex, race, functional status or perceived memory."

In the future, a predictive [test](#) could provide an opportunity for patients and families to prepare for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's [disease](#) and cognitive decline and allow them to make any necessary financial or family arrangements.

More information: Meera Sheffrin et al. Desire for predictive testing for Alzheimer's disease and impact on advance care planning: a cross-sectional study, *Alzheimer's Research & Therapy* (2016). [DOI: 10.1186/s13195-016-0223-9](#)

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