

Deaths from Alzheimer's disease in Scotland increase by 31% in one year

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Deaths from dementia in Scotland have soared by 31 percent in a year, according to new statistics released by the National Records of Scotland today.

Provisional quarterly figures for deaths in the country show that 1,877 people died from Alzheimer's and other dementias in the first quarter of 2017 – with deaths from Alzheimer's disease up 30.9 percent from the same period one year ago, and deaths from dementia up 17.9 percent. This equates to a 22 percent rise for all forms of dementia.

Some of the recorded rise is due to a change in the way death records are coded for Scotland's official statistics, with dementia now recognised as the underlying cause of death in many cases that would previously have been attributed to chest infections or pneumonia. However, this only accounted for a 7.5 percent increase in deaths from dementia – not enough to explain the 22 percent rise seen overall. Official statistics last year showed that dementia was Scotland's second biggest cause of death, and the overall trend in recent years has shown the number of deaths from the condition increase.

Dr Matthew Norton, Director of Policy at Alzheimer's Research UK, the UK's leading dementia research charity, said:

"The number of people dying from dementia has been increasing year on year in Scotland and across the UK, and these statistics underline yet again the urgent need to tackle this devastating condition. While part of the increase has been driven by changes in the way death records are represented in official statistics, these changes only account for a small proportion of the rise seen here. Age is the biggest risk factor for dementia, and our ageing population is driving increases in the numbers of people living with and dying from the condition – but dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing and these figures must galvanise efforts to defeat the condition through research. Our health and social care systems are already struggling to cope with the impact of dementia, and unless we can find treatments able to fight diseases like Alzheimer's this challenge will only worsen.

"Advances in medicine have helped deliver increasing life expectancy, but to ensure people can live healthily as they grow older we need to see similar progress in the fight against dementia. Increased investment in [dementia](#) research is imperative if we are to find the treatments and preventions that are so desperately needed."

Provided by Alzheimer's Research UK

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