

Slowing life expectancy improvements linked to increase in deaths from dementia

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A new report has highlighted increasing pressures on England's health services as deaths from dementia rise, coupled with a slowing in life expectancy increases.

The Marmot Indicators Briefing, published by the UCL Institute of Health Equity, is published on Tuesday 18 July and updates on several key [health](#) measures that are used to track progress on policies aimed at reducing health inequalities.

The [report](#) shows that although [life](#) expectancy at birth is still rising across England, the rate of increase has slowed since 2010. Current estimates show that a one-year increase in life expectancy is now seen every 10 years for women and every six years for men – compared to every five years and every three and a half years respectively in 2010. At the same time, increases in remaining [life expectancy](#) for people reaching the age of 65 have also slowed.

The report argues that deaths in old age have been driving this trend, with the number of deaths from [dementia](#) on the rise as the number of older people has also increased. According to the analysis, deaths where dementia was a factor rose by 175% in women over 85 between 2002 and 2015, and 250% for men – partly due to the increase in diagnosis rates for dementia, and partly due to the increased numbers of people reaching old age.

Dr Matthew Norton, Director of Policy at Alzheimer's Research UK,

said:

"This report shines a spotlight on a hard truth: that unless we can find ways to prevent and treat dementia, deaths from the condition will continue to rise as our population ages. Recent improvements in dementia diagnosis rates and changes to [death](#) records account for some of this rise, but our ageing population is also a major factor. Dementia can affect a person's ability to manage a range of other [chronic health conditions](#) in later life and therefore addressing dementia should be a major public health priority.

"Research into Alzheimer's and other dementias is progressing at pace, with more energies than ever before focused on translating our growing knowledge into benefits for patients. However, the reality today is that with no treatments to stop or slow the underlying diseases, the condition is placing an ever-growing strain on our [health services](#). We cannot alleviate these pressures without new treatments and preventions, yet funding for dementia research is still playing catch-up, with just one dementia researcher for every four cancer scientists in the UK. Dementia is our greatest medical challenge, and this report is a reminder that we must redouble our efforts to fight this devastating condition."

Provided by Alzheimer's Research UK

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