

Study suggests memory and thinking decline in transgender adults

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Research presented today (Wednesday 28 July) at the 2021 Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) in Colorado suggests transgender and non-binary adults are more likely to self-report

experience of worsening memory or thinking.

Speaking about the research, Dr. Susan Kohlhaas, Director of Research at Alzheimer's Research UK, said that "[dementia](#) affects nearly one million people in the UK and the condition is caused by a number of diseases. While age is the biggest risk factor for dementia, the condition doesn't discriminate and affects people from all walks of life.

"While this research doesn't look to see whether transgender adults in the US are at increased [risk of dementia](#), it does highlight higher levels of the subjective experience of memory loss compared with their cisgender counterparts. Subjective cognitive decline can be an early sign of dementia but can have a range of possible causes, and anyone who is worried about their memory should speak to a doctor.

"We are only at the very start of our scientific journey exploring the links between gender and brain health. This is an area that warrants further investigation, particularly as we know there are links between [dementia risk](#) and certain health factors, such as depression, that can disproportionately affect transgender people. Multiple studies have reported links between [hormone therapy](#) and dementia risk although a clear picture is yet to emerge from these studies, and so far this research has largely not involved [transgender](#) participants.

"We must work towards treatments that help everyone affected by dementia, so it's important that we make dementia research as inclusive as possible, which in turn will help us accelerate breakthroughs.

"Alzheimer's Research UK is partnered with the service Join Dementia Research to help those interested in dementia research get involved, and the service has recently updated registration questions about gender to ensure the service is more inclusive. If you're interested in taking part in research, you can register your interest by calling 0300 111 5111.

"Dementia isn't an inevitable part of getting older and there are things we can all do to help tip the balance in our favor. The best current evidence points to not smoking, staying mentally and physically active, drinking within the recommended guidelines, eating healthily, and keeping blood pressure and cholesterol in check."

More information: Conference link: www.alz.org/aaic/overview.asp

Provided by Alzheimer's Research UK

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