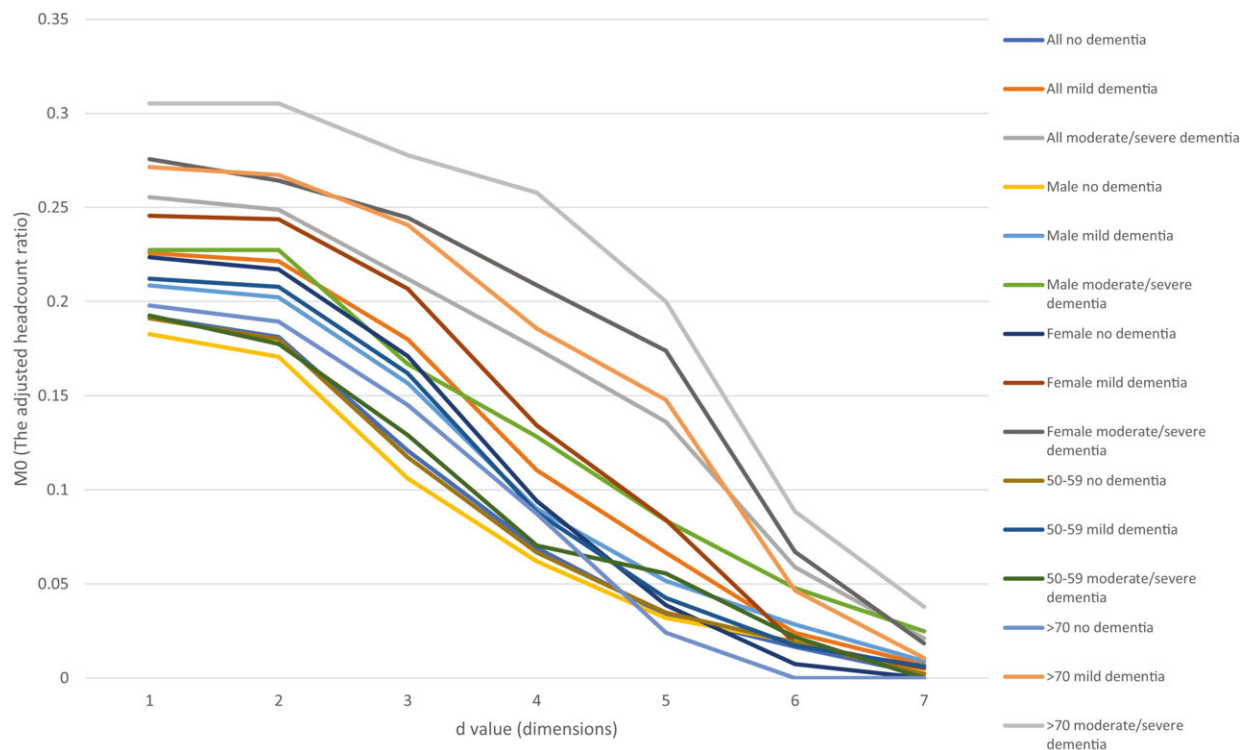


Social determinants of health increase Alzheimer's risk

March 6 2024, by Neil Schoenherr



Adjusted poverty headcount ratio for the equal indicator weighting structure stratified by dementia status alone (no, mild, moderate to severe cognitive impairment and dementia), by dementia status and sex (male, female) and by dementia status and age group (50–59 years old; 60–69 years old and over 70 years old). Credit: *Innovation in Aging* (2024). DOI: 10.1093/geroni/igae007

Social determinants of health are increasing the risk of Alzheimer's

disease and related dementia, finds a recent study from the Brown School and the School of Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis.

"It is central for prevention of Alzheimer's and related dementia to set up public policies addressing social determinants from very early on in life," said Jean-Francois Trani, an associate professor at the Brown School and first author of the paper "Is multidimensional poverty associated to dementia risk? The case of older adults in Pakistan." The study is [published](#) in the journal *Innovation in Aging*.

"Particular focus should be paid to free quality universal health care and education, fair access to the [labor market](#), decent housing secured for all, particularly the most vulnerable groups," he said.

Researchers conducted a cross-sectional study in the Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan in 2022 among adults 50 and older and considered multidimensional measures of poverty. Poverty was compared between adults with and without dementia using the Rowland Universal Dementia Assessment Scale, adjusting for sex, age, marital status and household size.

"Our results provide evidence that the burden lies with the structural and [social determinants](#) of health and it compounds exponentially, where those adults with greater poverty have a much higher risk of dementia," said last author Ganesh Babulal, an associate professor of neurology at the School of Medicine. "This provides multiple entry points for interventions for [public health](#), precision medicine and [economic policies](#)."

Findings from this study align with recent findings from Trani's group in [Afghanistan](#) (*eClinicalMedicine*) and [South Africa](#) (*JAMA Network Open*).

More information: Jean- François Trani et al, Is Multidimensional Poverty Associated to Dementia risk? The case of Older Adults in Pakistan, *Innovation in Aging* (2024). [DOI: 10.1093/geroni/igae007](https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igae007)

Provided by Washington University in St. Louis

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