

# Does general anesthesia increase dementia risk?

7 October 2020



provides evidence that anesthetic technique used during elective surgeries, general anesthesia or [regional anesthesia](#) is not associated with a long-term risk of developing dementia."

**More information:** Clive Velkers et al, Association Between Exposure to General Versus Regional Anesthesia and Risk of Dementia in Older Adults, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.16834](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16834)

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There are concerns that exposure to general anesthesia during surgery may contribute to an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease. To investigate, researchers compared exposure to general anesthesia versus regional anesthesia during elective surgery, looking for potential links to the development of dementia.

The *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study included 7,499 matched pairs of community-dwelling individuals aged 66 years or older who underwent surgery between 2007 and 2011 and were followed for up to 5 years.

The investigators found no difference in risk of being diagnosed with dementia for individuals who received [general anesthesia](#) when compared with those who received regional anesthesia.

"Many older adults experience changes in their cognition immediately following surgery and wonder what role the type of anesthetic might have played in these changes," said senior author Dallas P. Seitz, MD, Ph.D., FRCP, of the University of Calgary, in Canada. "Our study

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