Where you live is a factor in your dementia risk
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A Monash University study has found people who live in more affluent areas have superior memories and a lower risk of developing dementia, highlighting the need for better facilities in disadvantaged areas to promote healthy lifestyle habits and help curtail the growing burden of dementia.

The study analyzed data collected between 2016 and 2020 from the longitudinal, population-based Healthy Brain Project from the Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health incorporating 4,656 participants aged between 40 and 70 years without dementia.

The study found that higher neighborhood-level socioeconomic status (n-SES) was associated with superior memory and lower dementia risk scores.

The findings are now published in JAMA Network Open journal.

With dementia the second leading cause of death among Australians and up to 40 percent of dementia cases potentially preventable, the study identifies that more research, resource and efforts are needed for the lower n-SES to have a preventative impact.

Lead author Associate Professor Matthew Pase says a multi-faceted approach is needed to address some of the results.

"With healthy lifestyle habits a key factor in reducing or delaying your risk of developing dementia, it is important for everyone to have access to local facilities such as gyms and public pools, green spaces and health care, but unfortunately that is not always the case," said Associate Professor Pase.

"More research is needed to better understand the barriers for people so that informed solutions can be delivered at a community level to address the inequalities."

Dementia Australia says the term dementia is used to describe the symptoms of a large group of illnesses that cause a progressive decline in a person's functioning. Dementia can happen to anybody but is more common after the age of 65 and there is no cure.
Associate Professor Pase adds: "With dementia predicted to cost Australia more than $18.7 billion in 2025, it is important that everyone has the same opportunity to take ownership of their health."


Provided by Monash University