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Obesity Linked to Dementia Risk

A study published in the May 3, 2011 print issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology, examined the relationship between midlife obesity and dementia risk in late life. The study found that individuals who were overweight or obese at midlife had a higher risk of developing dementia, Alzheimer's disease or vascular dementia in late life compared to people with normal body mass index (BMI).

A growing body of evidence suggests that a higher BMI in midlife contributes to cognitive decline and dementia, and adds to a growing consensus that controlling body weight as early as midlife could also contribute to reducing the risk of dementia. The findings in this study also support the notion that what is "good for your heart is good for your brain," and that there is a link between midlife cardiovascular risk factors (including obesity, overweight, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes) and late life risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Public health officials should begin to work to incorporate brain health messages into healthy living campaigns and campaigns on cardiovascular diseases.

Diabetes May Be Linked to Elevated Alzheimer's Risk

One possible integration of brain health messages into existing public health efforts could focus on diabetes. Alzheimer's disease increases health care costs of individuals with diabetes by 60 percent. Beyond the cost element, emerging research shows that diabetes may be linked to an elevated risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

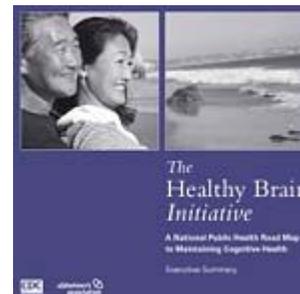
Public Health Agenda



The Alzheimer's Association has identified three key elements of an Alzheimer's public health agenda: surveillance, early detection, and promotion of brain health.

The Road Map

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Alzheimer's Association formed a partnership to examine how best to bring a public health perspective to the promotion of cognitive health. The resulting publication, *The Healthy Brain Initiative: A National Public Health Road Map to Maintaining Cognitive Health* outlines 44 priority actions to guide the public health community in surveillance, prevention research, communication, and policy.



Contact

For more information on the Healthy

The connection between Alzheimer's disease and diabetes was the subject of an Alzheimer's Association presentation at the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE)/ National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) 2011 Joint Academy and Midyear Scientific Meeting in Albuquerque, NM.

State Alzheimer's Plans Often Include Surveillance and Early Detection, but Not Brain Health Promotion

According to a content analysis of 19 published state Alzheimer's disease plans – an effort underway in many states to begin planning for the growing Alzheimer's crisis – nearly half of the plans included recommendations on surveillance and early detection. However, among these plans, there was minimal inclusion of recommendations regarding brain health promotion. The findings of the content analysis were presented by the Alzheimer's Association at the SOPHE/NACDD Albuquerque meeting.

For more information on the diabetes-Alzheimer's link and the state plan content analysis – or to obtain copies of the slides from the Albuquerque presentations – please contact [Catherine Morrison](#).

Officials in Louisiana and Ohio Are Told Alzheimer's Caregivers Face Big Burden

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's or another dementia – compared to caring for someone with another condition – takes longer, lasts longer, is more personal and



intrusive, and takes a heavy toll on the health of the caregivers themselves, according to caregiver data from the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey conducted in three states and the District of Columbia. To read the 2009 BRFSS Caregiving report, [click here](#).

On June 21, the Alzheimer's Association - Louisiana organized a panel discussion for state legislators, Alzheimer's advocates, and state public health officials to discuss the BRFSS caregiving data. Tiffany Netters, the Director of Chronic Diseases for the Office of Health, began the day with thoughts about the importance of surveillance, data-driven decision making in public health, and common risk factors

Brain Initiative, the public health agenda, or Alzheimer's disease in general, contact [Catherine Morrison](#).

between Alzheimer's and many other chronic diseases. The panel included Todd Griffin, the Louisiana BRFSS Coordinator; Erin Bouldin, the researcher who conducted the data analysis; and a local Alzheimer's caregiver.

In May, the Alzheimer's Association partnered with the Ohio BRFSS Coordinator, Patricia Coss, to present the 2009 BRFSS caregiving data at the Ohio Public Health Association conference.