



Global status  
report on the  
**public health  
response to  
dementia**



World Health  
Organization

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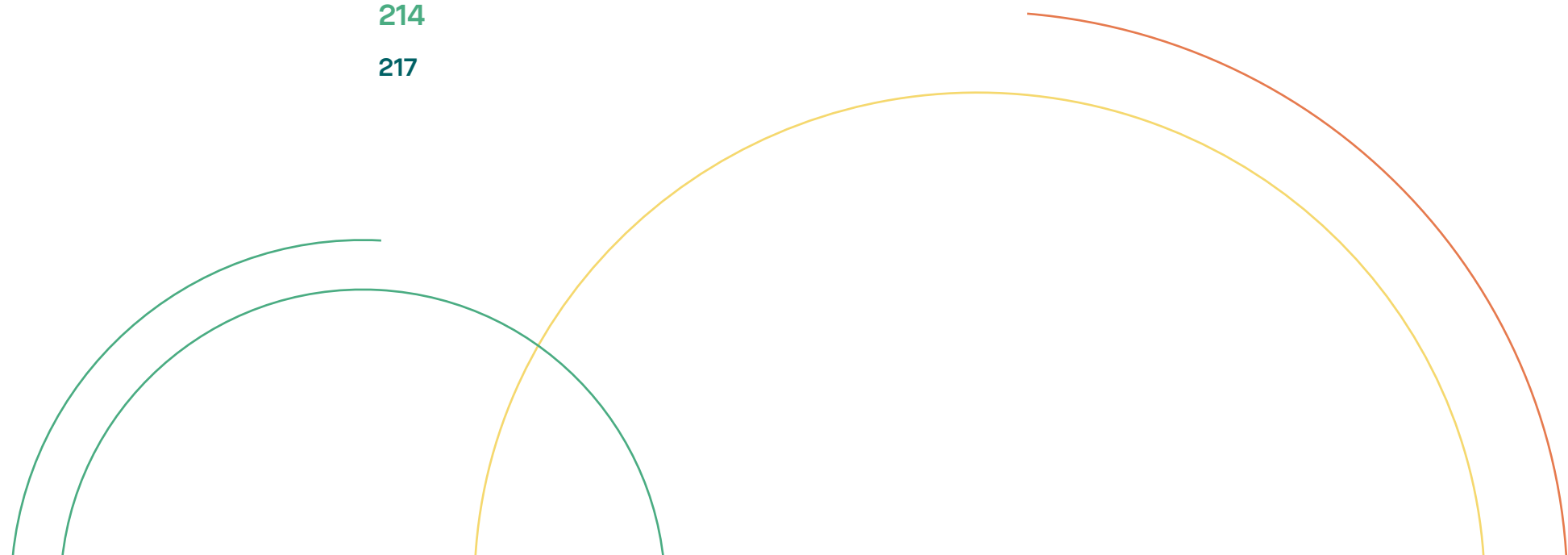
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# Foreword

The proportion of older people in the population is increasing in almost every country. By 2050, around two billion people globally will be aged 60 years or over. Dementia is currently the seventh leading cause of death among all diseases and one of the major causes of disability and dependency among older people globally. It can be overwhelming not only for the person living with dementia, but also for carers, families and society as a whole.

The alarming estimates of increasing numbers of people living with dementia worldwide, especially in lower income settings, cannot be ignored. Left unaddressed, such an increase would significantly undermine social and economic development globally.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents health systems, economies and societies globally with an unprecedented challenge, particularly for older populations. Older populations are most at risk from severe disease and death from COVID-19, and for people living with dementia, the profound disruptions of the pandemic are even more acute.

To achieve the goals of the *Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025*, we need a concerted effort by all stakeholders to improve the lives of people with dementia and their families. We must work together as a global community, coordinating research efforts and leveraging the tools and knowledge at our disposal.

WHO is fully committed to working with our Member States, civil society, the private sector and people living with dementia and their carers, to fulfil the targets in the Global dementia action plan.

We are all ageing, and many of us will one day need services for dementia. Building the services and systems to prevent, delay and mitigate the effects of dementia and providing quality care for people with dementia and their families is essential now, and for the future in our ageing world.



**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**  
Director-General  
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# Preface

The increasing global prevalence of dementia and consequent social and economic impacts on people living with dementia and their families pose significant challenges for societies. Ageism, stigma and social exclusion faced by people living with dementia, their families and carers cannot have a place in our society.

In recent years, the international community has recognized the urgent need for action on dementia. The Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025 represents this international commitment to meaningfully improve the lives of people with dementia, their families and carers. The Global action plan proposes recommendations across seven key action areas: dementia policy; awareness and friendliness; risk reduction; diagnosis, treatment, care and support; support for carers; health information systems; and research and innovation.

The Global status report on the public health response to dementia takes stock of progress made four years into the Global action plan. Data presented in this report shows that we must act urgently. We need renewed, coordinated efforts by all stakeholders across all action areas if we are to achieve the targets set by the Global action plan.

Dementia affects every country. A challenge of this size cannot be tackled by working in silos. We must combine forces, improve the capacity of health systems to prevent and treat dementia, share quality data, reach beyond our traditional ways of conducting research, and address dementia as a global community.

It is my hope that this report will shine a light on ongoing challenges in the field of dementia and present opportunities for accelerating action globally. We must all work together to ensure that people living with dementia, their families and carers can continue to live in their communities with respect and dignity, while receiving the care and support they need and deserve.



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