



DEMENTIA

A PUBLIC HEALTH
PRIORITY



Alzheimer's Disease
International



World Health
Organization



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CONTENTS

v	FOREWORD
vi	PREFACE
vii	ABBREVIATIONS
viii	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
5	CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION
8	Dementia: a public health issue
9	Objectives of the report
11	CHAPTER 2 EPIDEMIOLOGY OF DEMENTIA
12	Global prevalence of dementia
19	Dementia subtypes
22	Global incidence of dementia
24	Mortality associated with dementia
25	Economic impact: the global societal cost of dementia
29	Etiology and potential for prevention
30	Limitations
32	Future trends
32	Summary points
33	CHAPTER 3 DEMENTIA POLICY AND PLANS, LEGISLATION AND ETHICAL ISSUES
34	Dementia policies, plans and strategies
41	Social and legal protection, human rights and ethics
48	Summary points
49	CHAPTER 4 DEMENTIA HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SYSTEMS AND WORKFORCE
50	Health and social care systems
57	Care pathways for populations with specific needs
59	Workforce capacity-building
66	Summary points
67	CHAPTER 5 DEMENTIA CAREGIVING AND CAREGIVERS
69	Who cares?
71	What do family caregivers do?
71	What are the motivations to care?
72	What are the consequences of caregiving?
75	Interventions for caregivers
79	Strengthening caregiving
80	Summary points
81	CHAPTER 6 PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF DEMENTIA: FROM AWARENESS TO ACCEPTANCE
82	Awareness and understanding of dementia
83	The impact of stigma
84	Awareness-raising campaigns
85	Developing a campaign
87	Raising awareness in the political sphere: the role of advocacy
87	Six stages of acceptance of dementia – a civil society perspective
88	Summary points
89	CHAPTER 7 THE WAY FORWARD
90	The need for action
91	The value of action
92	The framework for action
94	Key messages
95	REFERENCES

FOREWORD



The world's population is ageing. Improvements in health care in the past century have contributed to people living longer and healthier lives. However, this has also resulted in an increase in the number of people with non-communicable diseases, including dementia. Current estimates indicate 35.6 million people worldwide are living with dementia. This number will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050. Dementia doesn't just affect individuals. It also affects and changes the lives of family members. Dementia is a costly condition in its social, economic, and health dimensions. Nearly 60 percent of the burden of dementia is concentrated in low- and middle-income countries and this is likely to increase in coming years.

The need for long-term care for people with dementia strains health and social systems, and budgets. The catastrophic cost of care drives millions of households below the poverty line. The overwhelming number of people whose lives are altered by dementia, combined with the staggering economic burden on families and nations, makes dementia a public health priority. The cost of caring for people with

dementia is likely to rise even faster than its prevalence, and thus it is important that societies are prepared to address the social and economic burden caused by dementia.

In 2008, WHO launched the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP), which included dementia as a priority condition. In 2011, the High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases adopted a Political Declaration that acknowledged that "the global burden and threat of non-communicable diseases constitutes one of the major challenges for development in the twenty-first century" and recognized that "mental and neurological disorders, including Alzheimer's disease, are an important cause of morbidity and contribute to the global non-communicable disease burden."

It is against this background that I am pleased to present the report, "Dementia: a public health priority." This report makes a major contribution to our understanding of dementia and its impact on individuals, families, and society. I would like to thank the representative organizations of people with dementia and their caregivers, who have greatly enriched both the scope of the report and its value as a practical tool.

The report provides the knowledge base for a global and national response to facilitate governments, policy-makers, and other stakeholders to address the impact of dementia as an increasing threat to global health. I call upon all stakeholders to make health and social care systems informed and responsive to this impending threat.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "M. Chan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Margaret Chan

Director-General
World Health Organization

PREFACE

Dementia is seriously disabling for those who have it and is often devastating for their caregivers and families. With an increasing number of people being affected by dementia, almost everyone knows someone who has dementia or whose life has been touched by it. The number of people living with dementia worldwide is currently estimated at 35.6 million. This number will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050.

The high global prevalence, economic impact of dementia on families, caregivers and communities, and the associated stigma and social exclusion present a significant public health challenge. The global health community has recognized the need for action and to place dementia on the public health agenda.

The World Health Organization and Alzheimer's Disease International, an international NGO in official relations with WHO, jointly developed the report, *Dementia: a public health priority*. The purpose of this report is to raise awareness of dementia as a public health priority, to articulate a public health approach and to advocate for action at international and national levels based on the principles of evidence, equity, inclusion and integration.

The report aims to encourage country preparedness by strengthening or developing policy and implementing it through plans and programmes which enhance dementia care in order to improve the social well-being and quality of life of those living with dementia and

their caregivers. The report includes an overview of global epidemiology and the impact of dementia, national-level approaches to dementia including the role of health and social care systems and workforce, issues around caregiving and caregivers, and awareness raising and advocacy for dementia.

As this would not have been possible without the significant contribution of representative organizations of people with dementia and their caregivers, we would like to thank them for their invaluable work and support.

The report is expected to be a resource that will facilitate governments, policy-makers, and other stakeholders to address the impact of dementia as an increasing threat to global health. It is hoped that the key messages in the report will promote dementia as a public health and social care priority worldwide.

Dr Shekhar Saxena
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ABBREVIATIONS

A & TSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
ADI	Alzheimer's Disease International
ADL	Activities of daily living
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APOE	Apolipoprotein E
CI	Confidence interval
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSAP	Carer's Strategy and Action Plan
DLB	Dementia with Lewy bodies
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
EuroCoDe	European Collaboration on Dementia
EURODEM	European Community Concerted Action on the Epidemiology and Prevention of Dementia
FTD	Frontotemporal dementia
GBD	Global burden of disease
GDP	Gross domestic product
HAART	Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy
HAND	HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder
HHS	Health and Human Services
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Hazard ratio
IADL	Instrumental activities of daily living
ICD	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems
IMPACT	Important Perspectives on Alzheimer's Care and Treatment
LMIC	Low- and middle-income countries
MAIA	Maisons pour l'Autonomie et Intégration des malades Alzheimer
mhGAP	Mental Health Gap Action Programme
MNS	Mental, neurological and substance use
NIH	National Institutes of Health
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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