

September World Alzheimer's Month

Dementia:
a journey of caring

www.alz.co.uk/WAM



world
alzheimer's month



Alzheimer's Disease
International

What is dementia?

Dementia is a term used to describe any condition that causes deterioration over time of a variety of different brain functions such as memory, thinking, recognition, language, planning and personality. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 50-60% of cases of dementia. Other types of dementia include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and fronto-temporal dementia.

Most kinds of dementia have similar symptoms including:

- Loss of memory
- Problems with thinking and planning
- Difficulties with language
- Failure to recognise people or objects
- A change of personality

There are currently more than 38 million people with dementia worldwide. By 2030 this number is expected to have risen to almost 66 million and to around 115 million by 2050.

A journey of caring



At some stage in the process of the condition most, if not all, people with dementia require some form of care. Caring for a person with dementia is most often an extended process with more and more care being required as time passes. The time a person lives with dementia varies, with some living for many years while others progress through the stages of the condition much faster.

While there are many positive aspects of caring, carers of people with dementia are very

likely to experience strain. 40-75% have significant psychological illness, and 15-32% major depression. There may also be physical health consequences – strained carers have less immunity to illnesses and a higher mortality rate.

Carers require a great deal of support to enable them to continue to care effectively. Help is available for carers from Alzheimer associations worldwide. To contact your national association visit www.alz.co.uk/associations.

Virginia, Honduras:

‘An important decision I took was to know more about this disease. I searched for information. We arranged family meetings with our neurologist to know more about what to expect and be prepared. We never tried to look away from this reality. We told all of our friends and relatives what was going on, and it turned out we had them near at every moment, especially in the most difficult.’

Elli and Ester, Indonesia:

‘In the beginning, living with people with dementia is very difficult and full of surprises. Almost every day unexpected things would suddenly happen.’

Yoshio, Japan:

‘Even though I understood that it was her illness that made her behave thus, there were times when I would find her savage words and irrational behaviour unbearable.’

Frances, USA:

‘When I was a caregiver for my mother, I saw two normal worlds between us, hers and mine. Once I acknowledged that her world was as normal to her as mine was to me, I stopped using reason and logic to bring her into my world.’

Raymond, Sint Maarten:

‘We all got involved in trying to prevent Edna from doing harmful things. I got the night shift, because my wife and the kids had to go to school during the day.’

María, Costa Rica:

‘I understand that it is impossible not to feel sorrow, seeing her going away little by little over time, and that I could not do anything to avoid it. I knew that all I could do was give her all my love, understanding and support.’

Federico, Mexico:

‘My father and his illness allowed me to appreciate what life is about, knowing that, despite the bad days and the bad times, the endless hours of anguish, anger and anxiety, there was always something to learn from that beloved person even though he had lost his cognitive abilities.’



Maureen, Scotland:

‘With the diagnosis came my role as carer. Not something that I was asked if I wanted to do, but something that was assumed I would. This was not an easy task considering that by this time I had come to hate James. However, I was married to this man in sickness and in health, so I stuck it out. I am glad I persevered as, with support, things improved.’

World Alzheimer's Month



September is World Alzheimer's Month, an international campaign to raise awareness and challenge stigma.

Since 1994, World Alzheimer's Day™ – on 21 September each year – has been the only day on the calendar to unite people with dementia, carers, and Alzheimer associations around the world. World Alzheimer's Month was introduced in 2012 and offers Alzheimer associations the opportunity to reach more individuals and groups and increase their efforts to call for improved support services for people with dementia and their carers.

World Alzheimer's Month
Hong Kong SAR 2012

Dieketseng, South Africa

“With Alzheimer's South Africa's help the people left behind were in a position to deal a lot better with everything that led up to the day he passed away.”

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Finding help

Support and information is available worldwide from Alzheimer associations in more than 80 countries. These associations exist to provide advice for both carers and people with dementia.

To find your national Alzheimer association visit www.alz.co.uk/associations



Alzheimer's Disease International

World Alzheimer's Day and Month are coordinated by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), the worldwide federation of Alzheimer associations.

Pictures courtesy of: Alzheimer's Association/Barbara Kinney, Cathy Greenblat, Iran Alzheimer Association, Elias Nahum Portes Ruiz and Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association