



Dementia News

Newsletter of ALZHEIMER'S & RELATED DISORDERS SOCIETY OF INDIA, DELHI CHAPTER

March 2014

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Dr. Manjari Tripathi

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Medical Panel
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Dr. A. B. Dey
Dr. K. S. Anand

Editor
Col. V.K. Khanna

Office
ARDSI - Delhi Chapter
RZ-62/9

Tughlakabad Extn.
New Delhi - 110 019
Ph. ; 91-11-29994940
91-11-64533663
E-mail ;
ardsi_dc@hotmail.com

Website ;
www.olzheimersdelhi.org

Regd. Under Delhi
Societies Act XXI of 1860

Regd. No. S 42990 of 2002
Dated 26th June 2002

Chairman, National Body
Ms. Meera Pattabiraman

ARDSI National Office :
Post Box No. 53,
Guru Vayur Road,
Kunnamkulam - 680503
Kerala
Ph. ; 04885-223801

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001-29994940
011-64533663

From the Desk of the President

Dear Friends of Dementia,

What is dementia?

Dementia is a collective group of degenerative brain illnesses which is characterised by loss of cognitive function (beyond what is generally observed with normal ageing). The exact cause of dementia is still unknown but several situations can cause dementia. Degeneration of brain cells (neurons), infections that affect the brain and spine, brain abnormalities like hydrocephalus, head injuries and nutritional deficiencies are few factors that can cause dementia. The diagnosis of dementia should be made ONLY by a trained neurologist, psychiatrist or a general practitioner who knows the evaluation of dementia.

Are there any other factors which increase the risk of dementia?

Apart from strong risk factors like age and family history, the risk of developing dementia seems to increase with almost everything that is associated with mental health. Because loss of cognitive function is a characteristic feature of dementia, factors like poor IQ will definitely have an effect on your risk factor for dementia. Studies have also linked increased risk of dementia with factors like excessive alcohol intake, head injury, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking and obesity.

What are the symptoms of dementia?

Dementia being a group of diseases does not affect every person in a specific manner. Therefore two individuals suffering from dementia can exhibit totally different symptoms. However, in the initial stages the following symptoms may be seen:

- Confusion
- Mood and behaviour swings
- Withdrawal from social interactions
- Memory loss
- Loss of practical abilities
- Gradual loss of body functions.

What treatment is given for patients with dementia?

There is no cure for dementia. The goal of treatment in dementia is to slow down the progression of the condition. Drug therapy is commonly used for treatment of most forms of dementia like Alzheimer's disease. For the symptoms of memory loss medications like cholinesterase inhibitors and memantine are prescribed. Sometimes, non-drug therapies like cognitive rehabilitation therapy also helps to alleviate a few symptoms of dementia.

Can dementia be prevented?

There are no specific preventive measures that can eliminate your risk of developing mental diseases. Anything that keeps your brain active may reduce your risk of developing dementia. For example, people who like playing chess, solve crosswords and puzzles use their brain a lot more than others who don't. Also, now we do have a lot of evidence which suggests that a healthy lifestyle and diet plays an important role in reducing the risk of dementia. According to a recent study individuals who maintain a healthy diet (that includes plenty of vegetables, fruits, fish, milk and unsaturated fats) between their 40s and 50s were at a reduced risk of developing dementia. People should actually get physically and mentally (move it - physical activity or loose it, use it - mental activity- or loose it) active not just as for fit but also for improving mental health.

We at ARDSI - Delhi have for this a day care center to help with activities and care at day time for your loved ones with dementia. Join us in carrying this activity onwards.

Dr Manjari Tripathi
Professor Neurology
NIH Fellow (UCLA)
Department of Neurology
Room No 705, Neurosciences Centre
ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
New Delhi, India, 110029.
Tel: 26594494 / 26588248(O)
FAX- 26588248/ 26588166
Webpage: <http://www.aiims.edu/aiims/departments/spcenter/nsc/neurology/manjari-t.htm>



Dr. Manjari Tripathi

The XVIII National Conference of Alzheimer's & Related Disorders Society of India (ARDSI)

XVIII National Conference of ARDSI was held on 29-30 November, 2013 at NEDFI Convention Center, Guwahati, India. The Guwahati Chapter, one of our newest chapters, took the initiative and under the leadership of Dr. Ajeya Mahanta, did a commendable job in organizing this conference, the first one to be held in the North East part of the Country. Dr. Manjari Tripathi, President, Delhi Chapter participated.

28th ADI International Conference

28th ADI International Conference was held at Teipei. ARDSI bagged the 1st ADI Metlife Foundation Award for the best dementia education project in the Asia Pacific Region.

TIES International Research Group

Prof Heather Wilkinson, University of Edinburg organized a workshop at Scotland where representatives of ARDSI, led by Dr. Amit Dias, took part. This workshop resulted in formation of the '**TIES International Research Group**' for research in the field of dementia in Taiwan, India, England & Scotland.

Asia Pacific Region

The Asia Pacific Regional office of ADI was set up in Singapore and Mr. Francis Wong took charge as the regional director. This will strengthen and build association in Asia Pacific region.

17th Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International will be held from 7th-9th Nov 2014 at India Habitat Center, New Delhi. The theme of the conference is "Emerging Challenges of Dementia in the Asia Pacific Region".

World Alzheimer's Day-2013

The World Alzheimer's Report 2013 Journey of caring: An analysis of the long term care of dementia was published and released World over on the occasion of World Alzheimer's Day. The World Alzheimer's month was observed at over 500 centers all across India and the theme for this year. "**Dementia – a journey of caring**" was highlighted in numerous ways like street plays, skits, memory walks and Television & Radio Programs.

ARDSI - Delhi Chapter

ARDSI – DC observed World Alzheimer's month by organizing various activities during the month. On the occasion of the World Alzheimer's Day the current year theme "**Dementia: a journey of caring**" was aptly depicted by its president Dr. Manjari Tripathi, Professor of Neurology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the presence of Dr. K.S. Anand, Professor of Neurology, PGIMER, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and Dr. Vinod Kumar, formerly with WHO and presently with the Geriatric Department of St. Stephen's Hospital Delhi. She spoke about "Factors which trigger Dementia", "Environmental Enrichment" by practicing Yoga and Holistic Healthy Aging.

Mr. Mathew Cherian, CEO HelpAge was the Chief Guest, who released the souvenir of the chapter and enlightened the audience on the essence

of caring and complemented the theme aptly. The audience interacted well with a panel of experts to clear the doubts on all forms of Dementia and caring aspects. The function was well attended with participation from few pharmaceutical companies in the region.



Releasing the Souvenir (IHC)

Radio Talks by ARDSI Delhi Chapter

There were a number of radio talk on various FM channels within NCR and All India Radio. The Rainbow channel broadcasted a show "Good Morning India" between 7 am to 9 am on 21st September, 2013. Another talk program "Ashiana" was aired on the same day between 2 pm to 3 pm. "Citi Lights" FM broadcasted a talk show between 6 pm to 7 pm on 20th September, 2013.

T.V. Program by ARDSI Delhi Chapter

An interview on "Awareness Program for Dementia" with Dr. Manjari Tripathi was telecast on Lok Sabha Channel on 20th Sept, 2013 at 5 p.m. Also on WAD, 21st Sept, 2013 Doordarshan and P7 News covered the program.



Media Channels covering WAD program

Interactive Session by Delhi Chapter with Senior Citizen Associations

An interactive sessions by Delhi Chapter with Senior Citizen Association at Mehrauli, New Delhi was held on 25th September, 2013 with over 40 participants.

This interactive sessions was followed by a memory screening process where the persons identified with memory problems were enabled appointment with specialist doctors for further diagnosis.



Interactive Session at Mehrauli in Progress

WAD at Day Care Center

The patients of Day Care Center were involved in World Alzheimer's Day observation along with their family members at Delhi Chapter on 26th September 2013.

The family members shared their experiences about the improvements of patients and their behavior and praised the services of ARDSI – Delhi Chapter. They appreciated the current year theme and thanked ARDSI – Delhi Chapter for their efforts.



Day Care Center, Tughalkabad, Celebrates WAD-2013

Day Care Center Anniversary

Day Care Center anniversary was celebrated at the center where our patients and their families, volunteers, staff and members of governing body participated. Our patients took active part in the celebrations and cheerfully rendered songs and bhajans.

Everyone present admired their singing skills and efforts. Dr. Tripathi, President ARDSI – Delhi Chapter, felicitated Mrs. Indira Mahalanobis the music teacher. The celebration concluded with a sumptuous lunch.



Patients rendering songs and Bhajans

Care Giver's Training

Our Training Faculty imparted Care Givers Training to 22 trainees (12 males & 10 females) of Pramati Care for Alzheimer's patients.

Pramati Care is a part of Corsoul Corporation. These care givers are available to Alzheimer's patients.



Care Giver's Training in Progress

Founder's Day

We celebrated our 20th Founder Day on 8th March, 2014 by way of having a picnic and support group meeting at Lodhi Garden. A gathering of 45 people which was attended by our patients, their families and members of Delhi Chapter made the atmosphere lively and enjoyed the party games and refreshments. It was a novel experience for our patients who never stopped smiling. A good indication.



Patients Relaxing & Enjoying the Picnic

Updates on Alzheimer's Dementia Research

What are the primary areas of Alzheimer's research?

Scientific research about Alzheimer's can be broadly categorized into five general areas:

1. Research about possible causes, which includes the identification of risk factors for Alzheimer's and the clarification of the underlying biological processes associated with the disease; major breakthrough in Alzheimer research.
2. Research aimed at improving early diagnosis of Alzheimer's,

including the identification of cognitive and biological “markers” (or tell-tale signs) for the disease and the use of brain-imaging techniques to identify brain changes even before symptoms are present;

3. Research to develop new treatments, including medications that target the underlying biological changes (or pathology) in the brain, and non pharmacological approaches to managing behavioral symptoms;
4. Research focused on prevention, which includes understanding whether certain drugs or lifestyle factors may exert a protective effect against Alzheimer's;
5. Research about care giving, including what types of educational programs are most effective and what types of support are most useful.

-Courtesy: Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research Foundation

Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research laboratory scientists have published a new finding that is being hailed as a potential paradigm shift in how researchers around the world will fight Alzheimer's disease. They have discovered a protein that is centrally involved in creating beta-amyloid. An over abundance of beta-amyloid kills brain cells and creates the devastating symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

“Alzheimer's disease is a devastating disorder for which there are no satisfactory treatments. Our findings reveal that gamma-secretase activating protein is a potential target for a new class of anti-amyloid therapies,” says Dr. Greengard.

Researchers at the Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research laboratory, Drs. Gen He (lead author) and Paul Greengard have discovered a protein that stimulates the production of beta-amyloid, and therefore represents a major new advance in Alzheimer's disease research.

The protein, called gamma secretase activating protein (gSAP), is expected to become a major target for anti-amyloid drugs that inhibit the brain's ability to produce toxic beta-amyloid in Alzheimer's disease. Beta-amyloid is a substance found in the brain that becomes toxic in Alzheimer's disease and is responsible for most of the devastating symptoms of the disease.

-Courtesy: Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research Foundation

Paying Attention to Blood Vessel Health in Alzheimer's Disease

People with Alzheimer's disease often have problems with blood vessels in the brain that may be making symptoms worse, a new study reports. The findings may help to explain why measures that can improve blood vessel health in midlife — like eating a heart-healthy diet, getting regular exercise and keeping cholesterol levels in check — may help to curb Alzheimer's in old age.

While strokes and blood vessel disease are commonly recognized causes of dementia other than Alzheimer's, the study provides additional evidence that blood vessel disease likely plays an important role in many cases of Alzheimer's as well. People who have signs of both Alzheimer's and blood vessel or vascular disease are sometimes referred to as having “mixed” dementia.

The findings, published in the journal *Brain*, come from researchers at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania who looked at vascular health across a wide range of brain ailments. They found that limited blood flow to the brain played a role in many brain disorders, including Parkinson's disease and Lou Gehrig's disease (also known as ALS). But compared to these conditions, vascular disease was far more common among people with Alzheimer's

-Courtesy: Brain

Diabetes drug may someday repair Alzheimer's damage

The diabetes drug metformin may spur the growth of new brain cells, which could have benefits for Alzheimer's patients, a new Canadian study on mice suggests.

The study showed that metformin caused brain cells to divide, producing new cells.

The diabetes medication was intended to target a specific pathway in liver cells. In the new study, researchers found that the drug activated that same pathway in brain cells, prompting new cell growth, said study researcher Freda Miller, a stem cell biologist and molecular geneticist at the Hospital for Sick Children Research Institute in Toronto.

The new cells that are produced could help to repair the effects of neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease. The concept that new cell growth could repair the brain is also driving research into neural stem cells, she added.

The research on metformin's effects on the brain is still in early stages, and the findings have yet to be shown in people.

Still, the researchers found that new brain cells grew in both living mice and in human brain cell cultures growing in lab dishes. They are now working to set up clinical trials, Miller said.

The researchers decided to test metformin's effects on brain cells after it was found that the pathway targeted by the drug in liver cells was also operating in brain cells.

-Courtesy: My Health News Daily

Please participate in the 17th Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International to be held from 7th - 9th Nov 2014 at India Habitat Center, New Delhi. The theme of the conference is “Emerging Challenges of Dementia in the Asia Pacific Region”.

For details visit : www.aprc2014-india.com