



PHARMA HEALTH CLUB

SAFE USE OF MEDICINES FOR BETTER HEALTH

1ST SEPTEMBER, 2015

Page 01

World Alzheimer's Day

Page 02

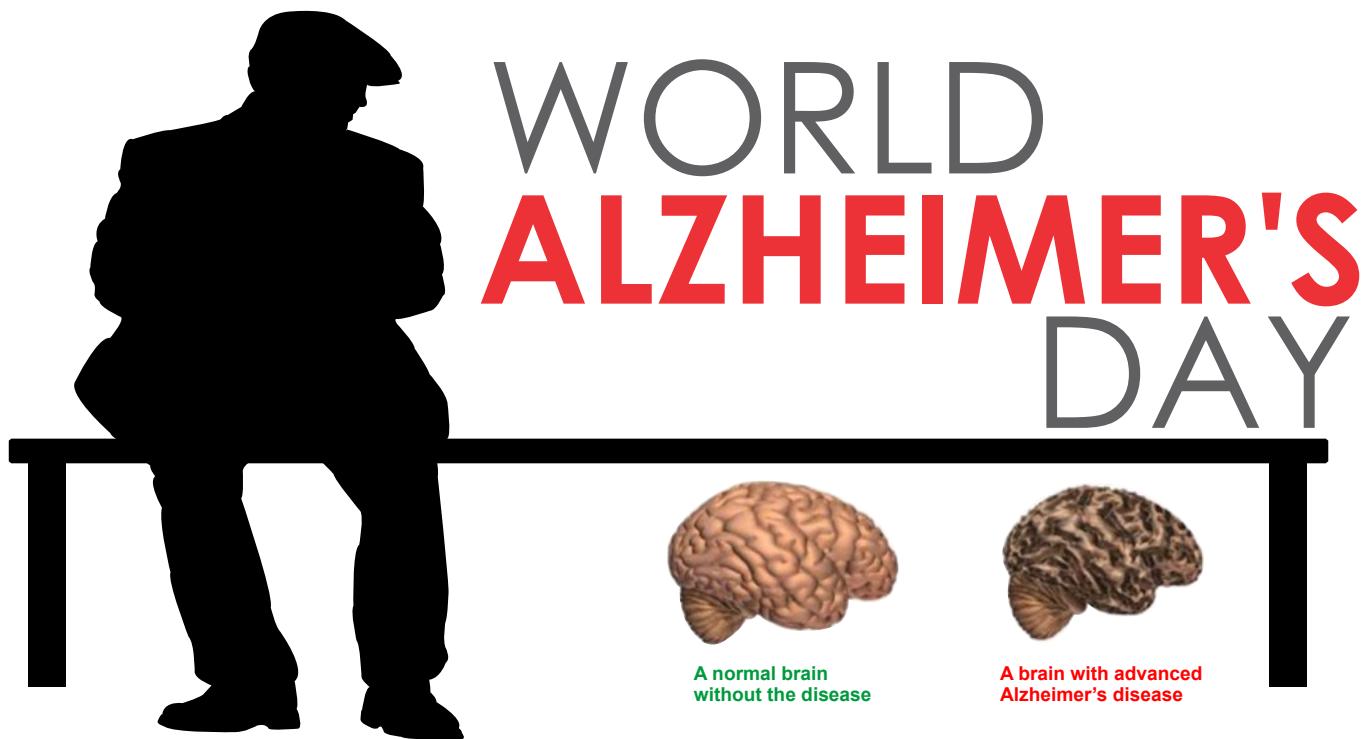
What are the Stages of Alzheimer's Disease?

Page 03

How to prevent Alzheimer's Disease (without Medicine!)?

Page 04

References



A normal brain without the disease



A brain with advanced Alzheimer's disease

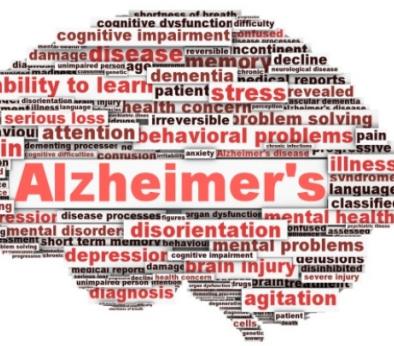
- Alzheimer's disease is the major cause of Dementia around the world and it is estimated that every year millions of lives are affected by it. Almost ten percent of adults above the age of 65 (Geriatrics) are affected by Alzheimer's and it is believed that the rate of disease will increase with age and time. There are also cases of early onset of the disease where people of 30 to 45 years become the victim. [1]

- ADI (Alzheimer's Disease International) launched International Alzheimer's Day (aka World Alzheimer's Day) on 21st September, 1994, on their tenth annual conference and declared it to be observed annually to spread the understanding of this degenerating disease of the central nervous system. [1]

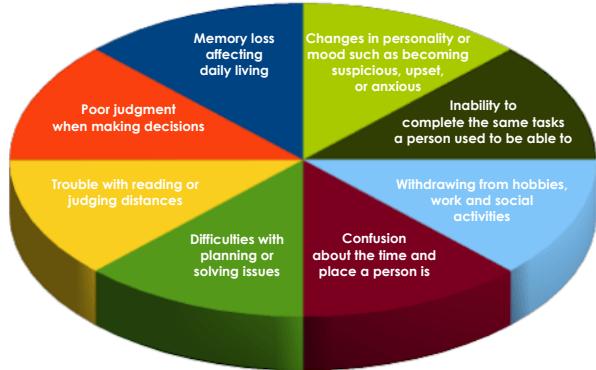
- As part of World Alzheimer's Month 2015, the theme is "Remember Me", encouraging people to learn to spot the signs of dementia and help those who are living with dementia. [2]

What is Alzheimer's Disease?

Alzheimer's disease (named after Alois Alzheimer, scientist who characterized it) is a neuro-degenerative disease where the patient starts to lose their memory, in later stages show behavioral disorders and even forget their own identity. Dementia is the major symptom of Alzheimer's disease where the person loses the activity of brain and memory. [1]



● Characteristics/symptoms



● What are the Warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease ?

- Memory loss disrupts daily life.
- Confusion with time or place.
- Decreased or poor judgement.
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.
- Changes in mood and personality.
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.
- New problems with words in speaking or writing.
- Withdrawal from work or social activities.
- Challenges in planning or solving problems.

● What are the Stages of Alzheimer's Disease?

There are 7 stages of Alzheimer's disease progression[6], viz.,

- Stage 1:- A normal stage in which patient is free from any medical condition and having no problem with memory or mood changes.
- Stage 2:- Normal Aged forgetfulness: This stage involves slight forgetfulness along with mood changes and is mostly seen in elderly people facing difficulty in recollecting names and other day to day activities.
- Stage 3:- Mild Cognitive impairment: The mild loss in cognitive function which basically involves the ability of the brain to think, process, store and finally retrieve the information.
- Stage 4:- Mild Alzheimer's Disease: It involves problems in doing complex activities which could include forgetting almost completely what groceries to get at a supermarket, can also include forgetting the day of the week or even the number of meals they had.

- Stage 5:- Moderate Alzheimer's Disease: It includes the loss in memory to do the basic activities of the day such as wearing clothes or shoes not according to the climatic change or not being able to remember the order placed in a restaurant.
- Stage 6:- Moderately Severe Alzheimer's Disease: It may cause the patient to forget how to wear shoes or clothes and even locking their house door.
- Stage 7:- Severe Alzheimer's Disease: It involves decrease in speech due to forgetting the most common and simplest words to communicate and also decrease in the normal physical activities, accompanied with abusive behaviour and fear.

● What are Currently available medicines for Alzheimer's Disease?

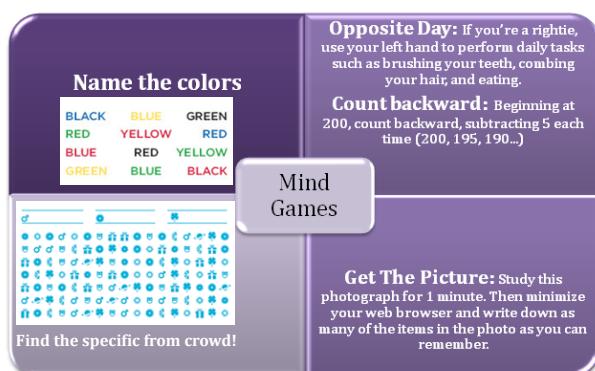
- Currently there is **no cure** for Alzheimer's.
- However there are several drugs that may be prescribed to help people with Alzheimer's. They are not cure but can help with some of the symptoms of the disease.
- Drugs such as:
 1. Donepezil (Aricept)
 2. Rivastigmine (Exelon)
 3. Galantamine (Reminy)
- These are used to treat symptoms in Alzheimer's disease.

● What are Preventive medicines for Alzheimer's Disease?



How to prevent Alzheimer's Disease (without Medicine!)?

- It's common to experience a little memory loss as you age, but much like muscles, the more exercise you give your brain, the stronger it will be. [10]
- Practice brain games, fill in crossword puzzles & do memory exercises that stress verbal skills. Few example [11] are as follows:



- Enrich your diet with plenty of omega-3 fats, low-glycemic-index carbohydrates (e.g., whole grains) and antioxidants. [10]
- Caprylic acid:** Marketed as a "medical food" called Axona® and coconut oil. The theory behind Axona is that the ketone bodies derived from caprylic acid may provide an alternative energy source for brain cells that have lost their ability to use glucose (sugar) as a result of Alzheimer's. [12]
- Huperzine A:** It's a moss extract that has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries. It has properties similar to those of cholinesterase inhibitors, one class of FDA-approved Alzheimer's medications. [12] Keep your Body fit & Take enough Iron supplements [10]
- An apple a day:** It keeps the neurologist away! Apples have enough antioxidants to raise levels of acetylcholine, which is an essential neurotransmitter for memory. The same antioxidants can also protect your brain from harmful free radicals. [10]
- Music Therapy (Listen familiar music/new tunes/pay attention to tempo of music), Pet therapy (Play with suitable pets!), Art therapy (Useful to improve/resore imagination power), Religious Activities (gives feeling of peace),

Aromatherapy (using vapors of essential oil) or Storytelling - Scrapbooking, etc can also be used in management of Alzheimer's Diseases. [13]

India and Alzheimer's

- Though India has 4 million people suffering from some form of Alzheimer's,[15] it still remains quite a low count compared to rest of the world (4-5 times less compared to some of the most developed countries, ranks low at 116th in death rates).[16, 19] with some villages being studied by international Universities to know why the count is less.[17]
- The reasons for comparatively low counts of Alzheimer's in India has been attributed to our daily spice Turmeric, which has Curcumin which inhibit the accumulation of destructive beta amyloids (responsible for Alzheimer's), delays degradation of neurons and also fights off most of the disease symptoms.[16, 18] Apart from our diet, a happy and fulfilling family life structure has also been found to be the reason for low Alzheimer's cases.[17]
- Our traditional herbs Brahmi, Shankpushpi, Ashwagandha and Malkangni have been investigated by global scientists using modern methods to prove their Ayurvedic claims of being memory enhancers and brain tonics useful in Alzheimer's.[20-22] However, a decrease in our own knowledge of common Ayurvedic herbs and a change in lifestyle has sparked a rise in Alzheimer's, and no symptom should be taken lightly.
- National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke - Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association (NINCDS-ADRDA) works on Alzheimer's in India.

NINCDS/ADRDA

National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Diseases and Stroke/Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association

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