

Number of Alzheimer's patients set to increase

Voice-over 1:

Following the death of her father from Alzheimer's disease, Barbra Fahlen has come to the research centre to have herself tested. Although only sixty-two, she felt her mind was failing. In fact, tests of her memory and grasp of spatial relationships showed that she did not have the disease. She will return in eighteen months.

Barbra Fahlen:

I just wanted to check out if it's just ordinary, you know, stress and you have lots of things to think about and you only take in what you think is important and you forget the er, the less important stuff. But I thought I started to forget appointments and when I walked upstairs with... to get a cup of coffee and I came upstairs and I said *What am I doing here? What was it I was going to do?* And sometimes I forget and I have to walk downstairs again and start from the beginning.

Voice-over 1:

Testing involving memory quizzes is the first step in establishing a diagnosis. Early diagnosis is important to establish whether there may be other causes of cognitive impairment.

Miia Kivipelto:

We are doing many memory tests s-so that we can really see if there is some memory problems, and then we have today some technical tools we can use to support our diagnosis. We are often doing MRI - neuro-imaging - so we can see how the brain structure is.

Voice-over 1:

Magnetic Resonance Imaging, or MRI, has proven itself to be an invaluable diagnostic tool for doctors researching Alzheimer's disease as well as many other conditions. By placing the patient in a powerful magnetic field, 3-D images can be obtained of the tissue being investigated. MRI scans clearly show what is happening in the brain. The scan on the left shows atrophy and shrinkage typical of advanced Alzheimer's disease, while the brain on the right is normal. But while researchers race to find a treatment, is there anything we can do to protect ourselves?

Miia Kivipelto:

Now we know that there are many lifestyle-related factors like er, er, physical activity, active lifestyle in general, mental training, social activities that can also protect against Alzheimer's disease.

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