

Call for the recognition of ageing, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in the 2011 UN Summit on NCDs

Background

1,200 delegates from 60 countries gathered in Toronto for the 26th International conference of Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) between 26-29 March 2011. The theme was 'The Changing face of Dementia'.

Delegates considered issues pertinent to the forthcoming High Level Summit on Non Communicable Diseases to be held in September 2011 at the United Nations.

Delegates noted that Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are not included in the initial UN resolution calling for the NCD Summit. They also noted the predicted increase in people over 60, who will therefore be at risk of all NCDs, including most importantly Alzheimer's disease.

Delegates observed that the implications of ageing and the associated risk of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is a key factor for the 21st century's social and economic sustainability, and should therefore be an essential component of the UN's NCD considerations.

Considerations for the UN summit

In the light of the above, delegates draw attention of the Summit to the following:

1. That health is a human right; health for all is a global goal; addressing ageing and Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in light of their impact on poverty, HIV/AIDS and Maternal Child Health; and that 'Advancing health and wellbeing in old age' is the second priority direction of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.
2. That numbers of people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are set to increase in line with the increased longevity of populations worldwide. By 2050 over 20 % of the world population will be over 60, and 115 million will have Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.
3. That global investment in public health and wellness has resulted in the triumph
4. of longevity, which is a worldwide phenomenon. By 2030, for the first time in history those over 60 will outnumber those under 15. Longevity is a strategic driver of prevalence, treatment, care giving and cost of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
4. That groundbreaking evidence on the cost and social implications on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias can be found in ADI's World Alzheimer Report 2009 and 2010 (See <http://www.alz.co.uk/worldreport>). In 2010, the global cost of dementia was \$604 billion or 1% of global GDP. The methodology provided unique insights to the underlying costs of informal care, borne especially heavily by poor communities worldwide and therefore associated with poverty. The research furthers understanding of prevalence today and the risks of disease associated with ageing - 1 in 3 over 65, -1 in 2 over 85, and offers UN experts a set of data for analysis today and predictability up to 2050, unavailable just 2 years ago.



5. That longevity and its implications are not being fully recognised in public health measures. Investment in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment and care services for older people suffering from NCDs, including Alzheimer's disease and other dementias requires specific action to ensure improved quality of life of this growing population.
6. That governments and experts should consider the positive fiscal impact on governments of innovative solutions to keep people healthy and active longer. Delegates noted that innovation would be an important factor in the work of the UN on NCDs.
7. That healthy and active ageing requires global investment in age friendly and affordable health services, and the participation of older persons and those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in the decision making process.

Recommendations to the UN Summit

- Alzheimer's disease and other dementias should be recognised, explicitly, as non-communicable disease priorities
- The Summit consider and act on the evidence documented in the ADI reports of 2009/10
- Discriminatory language related to older age be removed, for example 'premature death'
- Acknowledge the central importance of ageing processes and older people to the massive increased prevalence of NCDs
- The 'whole life course' approach be adopted for recommendations on more effective care, earlier detection and diagnosis as part of essential strategies for prevention, and innovations for treatment and cure
- Strategies to reach older persons and those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are included in actions relating to the summit's outcome
- The fiscal burden of care giving and the impact on families and caregivers is given special recognition as an essential pathway for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals
- The outcome of the summit supports both innovation and cost effective care to increase access of older people and those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias to the health and social services they will need

