



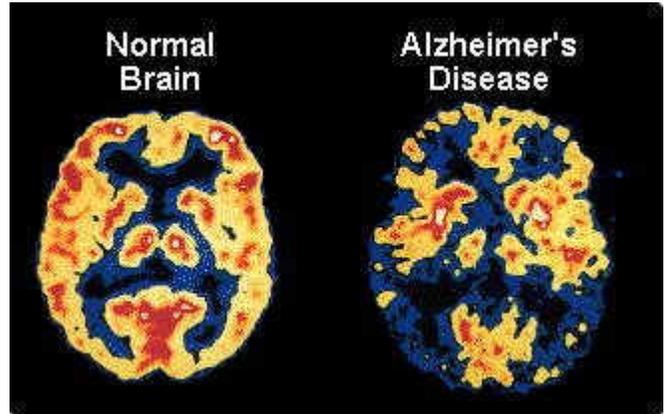
Health Ministry Memorandum

November 2012

Alzheimer's Awareness

November is Alzheimer's Awareness Month

What is it Alzheimer's Disease: Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. Symptoms usually develop slowly and get worse over time. Dementia is the loss of mental functions such as thinking, memory, and reasoning that is severe enough to interfere with a person's daily functioning. Dementia is not a disease itself, but rather a group of symptoms that are caused by various diseases or conditions. Symptoms can also include changes in personality, mood, and behavior. Dementia develops when the parts of the brain that are involved with learning, memory, decision-making, and language are affected by one or more of a variety of infections or diseases.



Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia.

Who is affected: Dementia is considered a late-life disease because it tends to develop mostly in elderly people. About 5% to 8% of all people over the age of 65 have some form of dementia, and this number doubles every five years above that age. It is estimated that as many as half of people in their 80s suffer from dementia.

Recognizing Alzheimer's Disease: Alzheimer's symptoms vary but right now 7 stages are recognized by Health Care providers. Stage 1 the person shows no memory impairment and no memory problems. Stage 2 the person shows very mild to no decline in thinking and memory. The person may express they are having difficulty remembering familiar words or finding everyday items. No symptoms of Alzheimer's are found with a medical exam and family, friends and co-workers do not notice any changes. Stage 3 there is a mild decline in thinking and memory. During a medical exam, the person has difficulty finding the correct word. Concentrating or remembering correct names can be detected. The person may also have more difficulty in social settings and

getting work and other tasks completed. They might begin to lose valuable objects and have increasing difficulty planning and organizing their daily tasks. Stage 4 is characterized by moderate cognitive decline. The person will show very clear symptoms. They will be forgetful of recent activities and events. Challenging mental math, such as counting backward from 100 by sevens cannot be performed. They will find routine, every day tasks like paying bills, managing finances or planning and preparing dinner for friends too difficult to accomplish. They won't be able to talk about their own personal history, such as where they were born, grew up, what their occupation was during their working years and they might become moody and withdraw in social or mentally challenging situations.

Can it be treated? Although current Alzheimer's treatments cannot stop Alzheimer's from progressing, they can temporarily slow the worsening of dementia symptoms and improve quality of life for those with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. Today, there is a worldwide effort to find better ways to treat the disease, delay its onset, and prevent it from developing. For more information, go to Alz.org.

