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Report On Dementia

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Introduction

Dementia is an increase neurological syndrome that affects the memory, thinking process, behaviour analysis and the ability to perform day to day tasks. It occurs when the brain develops damaged cells and cannot communicate effectively. Dementia is not a single disease but a term describing a group of conditions, most commonly Alzheimer’s disease, vascular dementia and Lewy body dementia (NHS, 2024). Early symptoms usually include memory loss, confusion, difficulties with communication, impaired judgement and personality changes. As the condition worsens, the individual may lose the ability to perform basic daily tasks independently. Dementia is a major global public health issue due to increasing life expectancy and aging populations. Worldwide, over 55 million estimated people are living with dementia (World Health Organisation, 2023). In the United Kingdom, approximately 982,000 people are currently affected, with increasing suggesting could rise to 1.4million by 2040 (Alzheimer’s Society, 2024). According to the Office of National Statistics, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease are among the leading causes of death in England and Wales (ONS, 2024). This report will highlight the growing severity of dementia, risk factors, ways to monitor, methodology, clinical assessment and many ways to provide services to health dementia patients cope with the disease.

Risk factors and Causes of Dementia:

Dementia develops due to damage to the brain cells that affects their ability to communicate with others. This disruption leads to cognitive decline and behavioural changes. Several risk factors contribute to the development of dementia. The initial risk factor is aging. The likelihood of developing dementia significantly after the age of 65 to

70. However, younger individuals can also develop early dementia, although this is less common (NHS, 2024). Genetic factors, particularly in Alzheimer's disease, can increase the risk of dementia. Family history and health conditions also contribute, while cardiovascular factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and smoking further raise the risk (Livingston et al., 2020). These factors can damage blood vessels in the brain and contribute to cognitive decline.

Social and environmental factors are also essential. Lack of education limited social engagement and physical inactivity all are a contributing factor for increasing dementia. As a result, public health strategies normally focus on promoting healthy lifestyles to minimize dementia.

Ways to Measure and Monitor Dementia.

Monitoring dementia prevalence and progression is important for public health planning and service provision. Multiple approaches are used to measure and monitor dementia.

Epidemiological Monitoring:

Epidemiology is the fundamental method used to measure dementia frequency. Government organisations such as the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and public health England collect national data to identify trends in disease incidence and mortality. For instance, the ONS reports that dementia and Alzheimer's disease accounted for over 74,000 deaths in England and Wales in 2023, making it one of the leading causes of deaths (ONS, 2024). Monitoring mortality and frequency rates allow policymakers to assess the impact of the disease and assign health care resources accordingly.

Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis:

Another important means used to monitor dementia is clinical diagnosis. Diagnosis normally starts in primary care, where a GP assesses symptoms and may refer the patient to a specialist clinic. Healthcare professionals use cognitive assessment tools such as:

1. Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE)
2. Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA)

These tests evaluate memory, attention and problem-solving ability. Brain imaging techniques such as CT or MRI scans may also be used to identify structural changes in the brain. NHS England tracks diagnosis rates as part of national dementia strategies. Around 65% of people estimate to have dementia in England and Wales currently have a formal diagnosis, demonstrating improvements in early detection (NHS England, 2025).

Health Data Systems and Registry

Health data system also acts as a key player in monitoring dementia. NHS digital records and GP data allow healthcare professionals to track patient outcomes, treatment patterns and service demand.

Data from these systems underlines regional differences in diagnosis and care, supporting informed policy decisions and future service planning. (NHS Digital, 2023; Department of Health and Social care, 2022).

Early Diagnosis and Treatment:

Early diagnosis is important in dementia care, as it enables timely access to treatment, support, and future care planning. Medications such as Donepezil, Rivastigmine, and Galantamine may help manage symptoms in Alzheimer's disease (NHS, 2024). Although not a cure, but they can slow progression and improve quality of life.

Public Health Prevention Strategies:

Public health initiatives focus on reducing dementia risk through lifestyle changes, with research suggesting up to 40% of cases may be preventable (Livingston et al., 2020). Key strategies include physical activity, healthy diet, reduced smoking and alcohol use, good cardiovascular health, and ongoing learning and social engagement, all of which support brain health and lower risk (NHS England, 2024).

National Dementia Policies:

The UK government has introduced national strategies to enhance dementia care, with the NHS long term plan focusing on early diagnosis, stronger community support, and improved assistance for carers, an additional effort, such as awareness campaigns and dementia friendly communities, aim to increase understanding and reduce stigma (NHS England, 2024).

Consequences of Dementia on Individuals and the Community:

Dementia has significant impacts on individuals, families, and the society. Individuals experience progressive cognitive decline affecting their memory, communication, and independence, often alongside psychological symptoms for example anxiety and depression, reducing their healthy way of life. Families, carers, and many of whom provide voluntary support, face emotional stress, physical strain, and financial challenges, sometimes wanting to reduce hours or leave work (NHS England, 2025). At a wider level, dementia places a major economic burden on the UK cost over £25 billion annually and increase pressure on healthcare and social care services, which must support growing number of people with complex needs (Alzheimer's Society, 2024).

Public and NHS Health and Social Care Support Services:

A range of health and social care is essential to support individuals living with dementia. The NHS provides medical care through GP assessments, memory clinics, specialist treatment, medication management, and mental health services, alongside personalised care planning (NHS England, 2024). Local authorities offer social care support such as home care, day centres, respite services, and residential or nursing home care tailored to those with cognitive impairments (Department of Health and Social Care, 2023). In addition, charitable organisations such as the Alzheimer's Society provide education, advice, and support groups, while community initiatives promote dementia friendly environments (Alzheimer's Society, 2024). Health and social care professionals play key role by encouraging early diagnosis, delivering person centred care, supporting carers, improving services collaboration and fostering inclusive communities to enhance quality of life and reduce overall care burdens (NICE, 2022).

Conclusion:

Dementia is a growing public health concern affecting millions of people worldwide and nearly one million individuals in the United Kingdom (Alzheimer's Society, 2024). The condition is characterised by progressive cognitive decline, impacting memory, communication, reasoning, and the ability to perform everyday activities. As life expectancy rises, dementia rates are expected to increase, putting greater pressure on health and social care systems (NHS England, 2024). Effective monitoring and management of dementia rely on a combination of epidemiological data, clinical diagnosis, and national healthcare information systems to track trends and support early intervention. Although there is no cure currently, early diagnosis, appropriate medical response, and way of life, interventions ease symptoms and improve daily living for patients (NICE, 2022). In addition to its clinical impact, dementia has substantial social and economic consequences, placing pressure on healthcare services, families, and informal carers who often provide unpaid support (Alzheimer's Society, 2024). Addressing these challenges requires coordinated action from healthcare providers, policymakers and community organisations. Expanding support services, promoting dementia awareness, and strengthening early detection strategies will be essential to improving outcomes and ensuring that individuals living with dementia receive appropriate, person-centred care (Department of Health and Social Care, 2023).

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