

## News Release

### ADI calls for urgent response to dementia on World Alzheimer's Day

*September 21 is World Alzheimer's Day – support the cause by encouraging the public to learn to recognise early warning signs*

- **Every 3 seconds someone in the world develops dementia but most people with dementia do not receive a diagnosis or support**
- **In 2017, there will be an expected 10 million new cases of dementia**
- **Governments must develop their own national plans**
- **Dementia will become a trillion-dollar disease in 2018**
- **Dementia can start to develop in the brain as far as 20 years before onset**

**London, 21 September 2017** – The global dementia crisis is increasing in severity, with it set to become a trillion-dollar disease by next year. Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) is calling on world governments and individuals to support initiatives for greater awareness.

Dementia is one of the most significant global health and social crises in the 21st century, yet too often diagnosis is made late. There is no cure for dementia. Nearly 50 million people are currently living with dementia worldwide, and this figure is expected to reach 132 million by 2050 if effective risk-reduction strategies are not implemented.

Acknowledging the seriousness of this global health epidemic, the World Health Assembly (the primary governing body of the World Health Organization (WHO)) adopted the [Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025](#) in May of this year.

Paola Barbarino, CEO of ADI, said *“Less than 30 governments out of over 190 WHO member states have developed a plan on dementia. Governments must act now to implement their own plans and policies to combat this serious and costly global epidemic. Investment in dementia research is critical, but so is support for those living with dementia and those who will develop the disease over the next few decades.*

*“It's vitally important that the public learn how to recognise the symptoms of dementia and to take warning signs seriously. Learning about dementia can also challenge the stigma and misinformation that currently surrounds the disease, which can stop or delay essential diagnosis.”*

Dr Shekhar Saxena, Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at WHO said, *“The plan is a comprehensive blueprint for global action. It contains specific commitments that all countries should make to respond to dementia, in areas including risk reduction; diagnosis, treatment and care; research and innovation; dementia-friendly communities; and support for dementia carers.”*

Glenn Rees, Chair of ADI, said, *“It is critical to improve access to support and care for people with dementia and their families, especially in low and middle-income countries.”*

Early warning signs of dementia

While individual warning signs can be attributed to other factors, when multiple warnings signs appear, regularly, it is important that they are taken seriously and medical advice is sought. Alzheimer associations offer valuable support and advice for those worried about dementia, and affected by or living with someone with dementia.

#### Signs and symptoms

- Memory loss
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- Problems with language
- Disorientation to time and place
- Poor or decreased judgement
- Problems keeping track of things
- Misplacing things
- Changes in mood and behaviour
- Trouble with images and spatial relationships
- Withdrawal from work or social activities

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#### NOTES TO EDITOR

This year, the [Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025](#) was adopted by 194 Member States of the WHO during item 15.2 of the 70th session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

#### **For interview requests and more information, please contact:**

Andrew Hamilton  
Mana Communications  
T: +61 (0) 420 447 669  
E: [ah@manacommunications.com](mailto:ah@manacommunications.com)

#### **About Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI)**

ADI is the international federation of 90 Alzheimer associations around the world, in official relations with the World Health Organization. ADI's vision is prevention, care and inclusion today, and cure tomorrow. ADI believes that the key to winning the fight against dementia lies in a unique combination of global solutions and local knowledge. ADI works locally, by empowering Alzheimer associations to promote and offer care and support for persons with dementia and their care partners, while working globally to focus attention on dementia and campaign for policy change. For more information, please visit [www.alz.co.uk](http://www.alz.co.uk).