

UK dementia numbers equal to combined population of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee

A major new Alzheimer's Research Trust commissioned University of Oxford report, *Dementia 2010*, reveals that the impact of dementia on the UK's society and economy has been significantly underestimated. The crisis is worse than feared and we now know that dementia affects 820,000 people, equal to the combined population of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee, costing the UK economy £23 billion per year. In Scotland alone, dementia affects 70,000 people.

The report also shows that dementia research remains severely underfunded compared to other conditions like cancer and heart disease.

The news comes a year after the government published its National Dementia Strategy. The Alzheimer's Research Trust, the UK's leading dementia research charity, warned that "dementia is the greatest medical challenge of the 21st century".

The Alzheimer's Research Trust's *Dementia 2010* found that each dementia patient costs the British economy more than the average salary and five times more than the average cancer patient. For every £1 million in health and social care costs for the disease, £129,269 is spent on cancer research and just £4,882 on dementia research.

The Alzheimer's Research Trust's *Dementia 2010* (www.dementia2010.org) reveals for the first time that:

- **820,000 people in the UK live with dementia. Previous estimates put the figure at 700,000.**
- **Dementia costs the UK economy £23 billion per year (previously estimated to be £17 billion). That is twice the cost of cancer (£12 billion per year), three times the cost of heart disease (£8 billion per year) and four times the cost of stroke (£5 billion).**
- **Combined government and charitable investment in dementia research is 12 times lower than spending on cancer research. £590 million is spent on cancer research each year, while just £50 million is invested in dementia research. Heart disease receives £169 million per year and stroke research £23 million.**
- **For every £1 million in care costs for the disease, £129,269 is spent on cancer research, £73,153 on heart disease research, £8,745 on stroke research and just £4,882 on dementia research.**
- **Every dementia patient costs the economy £27,647 per year: more than the UK median salary (£24,700). By contrast, patients with cancer cost £5,999, stroke £4,770 and heart disease £3,455 per year.**

Rebecca Wood, Chief Executive of the Alzheimer's Research Trust, said:

"The true impact of dementia – affecting 820,000 people, costing us £23 billion per year – has been ignored for too long. The UK's dementia crisis is worse than we feared. This report shows that dementia is the greatest medical challenge of the 21st century.

"Sadly, combined government and charitable research spend on dementia is 12 times lower than that for cancer. As the general election approaches, political parties need to explain how they will increase dementia research funding and end years of neglect. Charities and the public must boost their efforts to put dementia research in its rightful place: as our number one medical priority.

"If research leads to a cure for Alzheimer's and other dementias, annual savings to the state would be equivalent to funding every British university for over a year."

Prof Alastair Gray of the University of Oxford Health Economics Research Centre, and one of *Dementia 2010*'s authors, said: "The economic burden of dementia is far greater than that for cancer, heart disease and other major medical challenges. Despite high costs for unpaid and government-funded carers, dementia research is grossly underfunded in comparison with other disease areas."

Paul Burstow, Liberal Democrat MP for Sutton and Cheam who wrote a foreword to *Dementia 2010*, said: "The Government have held a summit on dementia research, but new money came there none. Instead a Ministerial taskforce on research has been set up."

"As *Dementia 2010* shows dementia directly afflicts 820,000 people in the UK. Yet it touches the lives of so many more people. The economists may say dementia costs £23 billion; the true social impact is incalculable."

"Dementia costs the UK twice as much as cancer, three times as much as heart disease and four times as much as stroke. Yet when it comes to research funding dementia is the poor relation. For every one pound spent on dementia research twenty six pounds are spent on cancer research and fifteen pounds on research into heart disease."

"*Dementia 2010* makes clear the scale of the challenge; it brings dementia into the spotlight. The case for investment in dementia research is powerful and clear."

Vivienne Hill, Alzheimer's Research Trust Champion, whose mother has Alzheimer's disease, said: "My mother was diagnosed with dementia eight years ago, and my family has come to know the devastation it causes. There are 820,000 other people like my mother, and around them, 820,000 families who live with the curse of dementia every day. For dementia to strike one person is tragic, for it to afflict as many as we now know is beyond words. We must do all we can to find answers."

The full Alzheimer's Research Trust *Dementia 2010* report can be viewed at www.dementia2010.org.

Notes

- The full Alzheimer's Research Trust *Dementia 2010* report can be viewed at www.dementia2010.org
- 35 million people worldwide live with dementia
- The Alzheimer's Research Trust provides free information on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias: phone 01223 843899 or visit www.alzheimers-research.org.uk. The charity relies solely on public donations to fund its research.
- The Alzheimer's Research Trust has a network of 15 research centres across the UK, including a multi-disciplinary centre at the University of Aberdeen and the University of Dundee Medical School. Each centre is headed by an internationally distinguished research scientist.

Local Context – East Kilbride

Recent figures indicate that approximately 3,990 individuals across South Lanarkshire suffer from dementia - with over 97% (3,851) aged 65 years or over. Current population estimates indicate that 16%¹ (circa 49,000) of South Lanarkshire's population are over the age of 65. It is estimated that the number of individuals with **dementia in East Kilbride will increase at a rate of 45%**² over the 10 year period 2000 – 2010, compared to an 18% increase across the local authority area as a whole. It is estimated that almost 1,000 of the East Kilbride population will be suffering from dementia by 2010.

Other Service Provision

A review of the Care Commission Register indicates that 3 additional facilities within the East Kilbride locale provide support services and 'day opportunities' for older people. All 3 are operated by the local authority, however only 1 of the facilities provide specific support for people with dementia. The later centre provides 12 places per day, 7 days per week.

¹[1] Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (2009) – Mid Year Population Estimates (2008)

²[2] South Lanarkshire Council, Local Housing Strategy 2004 – 2009, Topic Paper 7 (Extract Community Care Plan)