



## Short Note on Alzheimer's Disease

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### DESCRIPTION

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive neurological disorder that causes the brain to shrink (atrophy) and brain cells to die. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia, a continuous decline in thinking, behaviour and social skills that affects an individual's ability to function independently. About 5.8 million people in the United States over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease. Of these, 80% are over 75 years old. It is estimated that 60% to 70% of the approximately 50 million people with dementia worldwide have Alzheimer's disease. One of the early signs of this illness is forgetting recent events and conversations. As the disease progresses, people with Alzheimer's disease develop severe memory loss and lose the ability to do their daily work. Drugs can temporarily improve or slow the progression of symptoms. These treatments may help people with Alzheimer's disease to maximize their function and maintain independence for some time. A variety of programs and services can help people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease or changing the process of brain disease. In advanced stages of the disease, complications of severe loss of brain function, such as dehydration, malnutrition, and infections, can lead to death. Alzheimer's disease causes poor concentration and thinking, especially in abstract concepts such as numbers. Multitasking is especially difficult, and managing your finances, balancing check books, and paying invoices on time can be difficult. People with Alzheimer's disease may not be able to recognize and process numbers. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease in which the symptoms of dementia gradually worsen over the years. Memory loss is minor in the early stages, but in late Alzheimer's disease people lose the ability to talk and react to their surroundings. Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. On average, people with Alzheimer's disease live 4 to 8 years after diagnosis, but can live up to 20 years depending on other factors. The most common early sign of Alzheimer's disease is the difficulty in remembering newly learned information. Like other parts of our body, our brains change as we grow older. Most of us eventually find that our thoughts slow down and we

sometimes have problems remembering certain things. However, severe memory loss, confusion, and other major changes in the way our minds work can be a sign that brain cells are dysfunctional. Changes in Alzheimer's disease usually begin with parts of the brain that affect learning. As Alzheimer's disease progresses in the brain, it causes increasingly serious symptoms such as disorientation, mood, and behavioural changes. People with memory loss or other possible signs of Alzheimer's may find it hard to recognize they have a problem. Signs of dementia may be more obvious to family members or friends. Anyone experiencing dementia like symptoms should consult a doctor as soon as possible. Earlier diagnosis and intervention methods are improving dramatically, and treatment options and sources of support can improve quality of life.

There are 100 billion nerve cells (neurons) in the brain. Each nerve cell connects with many other cells to form a communication network. Groups of nerve cells have special tasks. Some are involved in thinking, learning and memory. Others help us see, hear, and sniff. To do their job, brain cells work like small factories. They get supplies, generate energy, build equipment, and dispose of waste. Cells also process and store information and communicate with other cells. To keep doing everything, you need adjustments and large amounts of fuel and oxygen. Scientists believe that Alzheimer's disease prevents some of the cell factories from functioning properly. I don't know where the problem comes from. However, as in a real factory, backups and failures on one system can cause problems in other areas. When the damage spreads, the cells lose their ability to work and eventually die, causing irreversible changes in the brain. Two abnormal structures, called amyloid plaques and tangles, are the main suspects in damaging and killing nerve cells. Amyloid plaque is a deposit of a protein fragment called beta-amyloid that accumulates in the space between nerve cells. Tangles are twisted chains of another protein called tau that accumulates inside the cell. Although autopsy studies have shown that most people develop amyloid plaques and tangles with age, patients with Alzheimer's disease start in areas important to memory and far before spreading to other areas. It tends to develop in a fast and predictable pattern.

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