

# Alzheimer's In The News



**PERIODIC NEWSLETTER:** Keeping up with that 'Mountain of Press'. Check out the Training Video for Caregivers (professional and family) of those who have progressed to states of dependence: [www.on-dementia.com](http://www.on-dementia.com)

**A SIMPLE PHILOSOPHY OF CARING** the best medicine. Experience says: Generally, hesitate to medicate unless it is absolutely necessary. Use common sense, eat a balanced diet; most of us ignore that advice and have our chocolate cake, so don't take it all so seriously. There are advantages of sugar and caffeine on mood and behavior for us all. Keep life simple and enjoyable

**ONE OF THE MOST PROBLEMATIC** issues today is misdiagnosis. Be careful who you choose to help you with cognitive problems. A specialist is best in this case. There is still no known cause or cure for Alzheimer's. The diagnostic process available is complex and inconclusive. I wonder what we'll learn in a few years that will change what we think we know today.

**SORRY TO SAY** there is no 'one size fits all'. There are similarities in symptoms among those with various types of dementia, but variables exist in every aspect of symptoms and progression based on the uniqueness of individuals and their personalities. Intellect, emotional balance, spiritual health and physical limitations each play into the equation.



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## **IN THE NEWS:** Summaries

**www.LTLMAGAZINE.COM: Quality in advanced dementia care – this article by Lois A. Bowers, Senior Editor describes,** how a health economist identifies 3 challenges and five solutions: Challenges 1. Payment for services 2. Regulation of service providers 3. Fragmentation --- then offers these 5 solutions: 1. Increased payment 2. Pay for Performance 3. Report cards 4. Regulation 5. Care Coordination. I find this incredibly reminiscent of public school ‘solutions’ that haven’t worked for public education, nor do I see it working for health care. First, Medicare and Medicaid funding have been reduced increasingly every year for the past 15 years and although there are now ‘quality add on’ dollars – the standards they have proposed are exercises in the ridiculous. They have the entire health care industry jumping through hoops and still charting for dollars. Regulation has gone overboard for the past 20 years, to the extent that no one has time to attend to the real business of bedside care for having to chart, document and prove everything that is done. When I read an article like this, that is simply mimicking the ‘others’ who are proposing simple answers to complex problems – I find myself mystified by the ignorance. It is just simply redundant after a while.

**West Shore Magazine \* Spring 2015 highlights an article by Karen Fuller titled, “Caring Help’ on the SAIDO learning treatment** method that is being used as a treatment method to work with adults with dementia or Alzheimer’s disease. This ‘treatment’ touts improvement in the symptoms of memory loss. We’ve read about this before and yet still, we falter in consistency of result. What we do know is that social interaction with those who suffer from cognitive loss is one of the most beneficial interventions to promote well-being and can be done with a myriad of exercises.

**AARP.org/bulletin: January-February 2015** touts 2 articles (15): 1 – “Where’s the War on Alzheimer’s?” by T. R. Reid speaks to the research funding lags, the number of cases increasing every year and the staggering cost. Reid seems to be screaming for a little attention to the issue that is threatening to bankrupt Medicare and Medicaid. His projections through 2050 indicate that total spending on AD in 2010 was \$172 billion and extrapolates \$1.205 Trillion by 2050 – while comparing as well, the number of people with these diseases starting at 4.7 million in 2010 and expanding to 13.8 million by 2050. The article ends with some feeble suggestions: ie. 1. If you have spoken two languages all your life, you might be at reduced risk for dementia – but no reduction in risk if you start after retirement and 2. Exercise, eat right and focus on good weight control. Honestly, it seems the further we go, the sillier we get.

**Second Article: by Bill Newcott,** “Forgetting but not Forgotten” this article speaks to the movie “Still Alice” and its impact – it led this writer to declare that the central fear of Alice was that she’d lose herself and gave a few examples of people he had interviewed who did not have that fear. He proceeds to argue about whether its association with age is pertinent to finding a cure and closes with an optimistic parallel to cancer saying, “we fought this awareness issue with cancer 30 years ago. I think we could do it with Alzheimer’s too.” From my viewpoint awareness of the disease is not the issue, really. What we need is affordable care and assistance for families and it isn’t available.

**McKnight’s Weekly Roundup – August 24, 2015 article by Emily Mongan reports,** “State puts new limits on memory care advertisements” and declares that Nursing homes will no longer be able to advertise that they provide ‘memory care’ or similar services unless they meet state dementia care standards -----here we go with more regulations!

**Provider Magazine article by Bill Myers in NEWS/CURRENTS reports in an article,** “Alzheimer’s Families want more Focus on Care, Less on Cure, Reports New Study” that researchers at the University of Buffalo surveyed hundreds of relatives, friends and lovers of those suffering from AD. They found that the top priority was money and other resources to SUPPORT CAREGIVING, long term care and aging in place with the appropriate assistance. In 2013 AARP did an analysis and found that there were about 40 million family caregivers taking care of their loved ones. If those people were paid the prevailing wage for their efforts, it would be worth some \$470 billion. The main call in this article is help for the caregivers and dollars to care for these people is more pre-eminent than the research that has brought nothing over the last 40 years of which I’m aware.

**CAREGIVING TIP:** Music, love, patience, a walk in the park, look at puppies and babies and hold hands and have lots of our favorite snacks.



Life is too short to do otherwise.

CARE GIVERS....

Remember that you are only 1 person and 24-hour shifts and constant care takes its toll. Plan ahead and shop the options for help and placement possibilities. Look to others who care for you and ask them for a hand. You need and deserve a break... Chances are, you’ve already done more than your share.