



**Alzheimer's Disease  
International**

*The global voice on dementia*

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL TUESDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2014, 09.00 UK TIME**

## **Report shows undernutrition as a major problem among people with dementia**

**London, 11 February 2014:** A new report, released today, highlights that undernutrition is a major problem among people with dementia, and stresses the importance of recognising nutrition as a potential key factor in the wellbeing of people with dementia.

Research reviewed in the report finds that 20-45% of those with dementia in the community experience clinically significant weight loss over one year.

Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) and Compass Group commissioned a team of researchers, led by Professor Martin Prince from the King's College London Global Observatory for Ageing and Dementia Care, to produce the report '*Nutrition and dementia: a review of available research*'.

The report reviews existing research on dietary factors across the life course that might increase or decrease the risk of developing dementia in later life. While obesity in mid-life may be a risk factor for developing dementia in late life, weight loss tends to become a more significant issue in the decade leading up to the clinical onset of the disease and accelerates thereafter.

The report also details actions that could improve the nutrition of people with dementia through diet and external factors such as modifying the mealtime environment, and supporting and training carers. Given the evidence for effective interventions, there is much untapped potential to improve the food intake and nutritional status of people with dementia.

Professor Prince, from King's College London, says: "For older people, undernutrition is arguably a greater health concern than obesity, and it is particularly common among people with dementia. This is a neglected area of research with important implications for quality of life, health and functioning. While weight loss in dementia is very common and can be an intrinsic part of the disease, it could be avoided and we should be doing more to tackle the problem."

Marc Wortmann, Executive Director, ADI, says: "I am very pleased that ADI and Compass Group commissioned this report. We believe that a focus on diet, nutrition and wellbeing is a positive approach to supporting people with dementia and carers of this devastating disease. The report also shows we need more research into the potential role of nutrition in reducing the risk of developing dementia."



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The Report recommends that:

- The adoption of nutritional standards of care for people with dementia should be considered throughout the health and social care sectors. These could include regular monitoring of weight, as well as assessments of diet and feeding behaviours, and the need for feeding assistance.
- Family and professional carers should be trained and supported to understand and meet the challenges involved in maintaining adequate nutrition for people with dementia.
- Evidence-based advice should be provided to inform consumer choices regarding the balance of risks and benefits associated with the use of nutritional supplements claimed to protect cognition in late life, before or after the onset of dementia.
- More research should be conducted into the effective components of a diet that might prevent dementia and the progression of mild cognitive impairment.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Full report**

From 9am UK time on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February, the full report can be found at <http://www.alz.co.uk/nutrition>

### **Publication launch**

The report will be launched at an event on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February at 08.30am at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London, SW1P 3EE.

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**About your organization [XXXXXXXXXX]**



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**About Alzheimer's Disease International**

ADI is the international federation of 79 Alzheimer associations around the world, in official relations with the World Health Organization. ADI's vision is an improved quality of life for people with dementia and their families throughout the world. ADI believes that the key to winning the fight against dementia lies in a unique combination of global solutions and local knowledge. As such, it works locally, by empowering Alzheimer associations to promote and offer care and support for people with dementia and their carers, while working globally to focus attention on dementia and campaign for policy change from governments. For more information, visit [www.alz.co.uk](http://www.alz.co.uk).

**About the King's College London Global Observatory for Ageing and Dementia Care**

The Global Observatory for Ageing and Dementia Care, hosted at the Health Service and Population Research Department, King's College London, was founded in 2013. Supported by Alzheimer's Disease International and King's College London, the Observatory aims to synthesise global evidence for policymakers and the public through high impact evidence-based reports for Alzheimer's Disease International (World Alzheimer Reports 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013), the World Health Organization (Dementia; a Public Health Priority 2012) and other relevant intergovernmental organisations. A particular focus is to identify and promote effective innovations in health and social care policy and practice. <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/index.aspx>