

The OECD

Brings Alzheimer's and Dementia to Center Stage



With a name like The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), you wouldn't think this renowned international think tank would set its sights on Alzheimer's disease. A half-century ago, they set out on a definitive mission: To promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. What can a degenerative brain disease possibly have to do with that?

Everything, according to Richard Johnson.

The bottom line for the OECD, he will tell you, is improving lives. Every day its 34 member countries, over 100 key partners, and more than 200 committees composed of top minds and decision makers are finding innovative ways to positively impact lives the world over.

Research and innovation have been at the center of Richard Johnson's life's work, as senior partner at the Washington, DC law office of Arnold & Porter, and now as a driving force in efforts to help shape global policies.

Globally Speaking

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CEO of the policy strategy and thought leadership firm Global Helix, LLC, he serves as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of several OECD committees and its Business Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC), and is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences Board on Life Sciences.

"Alzheimer's," says Johnson, "is not just a health issue. It is a fiscal issue. It is an economic competitiveness issue. There is real recognition by policymakers that this really is a major twenty-first-century global challenge. Alzheimer's and dementia already account for more than 1% of global GDP. Very conservative estimates in the U.S. are well over \$200 billion a year, and in Europe over \$240 billion a year. Alzheimer's Disease International's latest report estimates that the total worldwide cost is over \$600 billion dollars."

And, he points out, with a world population that is living longer, that number has

nowhere to go but up. "It's a good news/bad news story. People are living longer, that's good news. But the bad news is that a huge percentage of them – forty to fifty percent over the age of 85, it's estimated – are going to develop a form of Alzheimer's or dementia. If the current science is right, and this is a 20-25 year cascading progression, how do you find people before they are symptomatic and intervene sooner? The ability to delay the onset of symptoms by as little as five or six years can have significant beneficial impact on the burdens, both personal and economic, of a problem that has no international or socioeconomic borders."

"Alzheimer's and dementia are propelling up the global A-list of challenges that demand action."

Richard A. Johnson

Dementia Worldwide

- The number of people with dementia will increase from 44 million in 2013 to 135 million by 2050
- Worldwide, the economic cost of dementia is over \$600 billion annually
- By 2050, 71% of people with dementia will live in low or middle income countries
- Only 13 of 193 WHO countries have a national dementia plan in place
- There is a new case of dementia somewhere in the world every 4 seconds
- Approximately 3 out of 4 people with dementia have not been diagnosed

Statistics: Alzheimer's Disease International

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The Game Plan for Global Initiative

Johnson sees the role of the OECD as twofold – the first step being to increase the visibility of Alzheimer's and dementia as a global challenge. "UK Prime Minister David Cameron has taken the lead. He pushed for its place on the agenda for heads of state at the 2013 G7 summit, resulting in the creation of the World Dementia Council."

The second step is where the very essence of the OECD comes into play, he explains. "You have all these different prongs of things that need to be done, but how can you meld them all into a more holistic approach? One of the big things the OECD can do is just that. Over the past year, the World Dementia Council, together with the OECD, has hosted a series of worldwide high-level Legacy Events bringing together experts in everything from big data, clinical research and care models to regulatory issues and new types of public/private investment models needed to deal with the complexity of Alzheimer's and dementia.

"The OECD has become the global hub – a combination of convener, catalyst and convergence center for all the core dimensions of dementia. There is now recognition that you need this new type of convergence. It's not just a matter of creating a care model. You've got to figure out how it links with big data, with the research side, and with the regulatory side. There needs to be a paradigm shift in the whole regulatory process, acknowledging that this is not the usual disease where someone is presenting with a symptom, and that we need to identify those at risk and intervene earlier."

Resources and Research Dollars

Another hurdle, especially in these times of particularly tight budgets, is finding research dollars, says Johnson. "The research investments in Alzheimer's and dementia, in almost all countries, are ten or

fifteen percent of investments in cardiovascular or cancer funding. So one of the policy issues is how to increase that, and yet at the same time not reallocate dollars from cardiovascular or cancer research. You need to find those dollars, euros, yen now, because if you don't, the burden on the economic side alone is going to keep going up exponentially and, in 15 to 25 years, be totally unsustainable.

"Seventy percent of the burden of Alzheimer's and dementia falls outside the most advanced developing countries, but they account for eighty percent of the investment in research. So there is a mismatch of resource allocation. What you really have in developing countries is a divide between those with aging populations and those that with young populations. For countries with a younger demographic, there are a lot of other health issues that are more important on a relative basis than Alzheimer's."

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The Power of Pulling Together

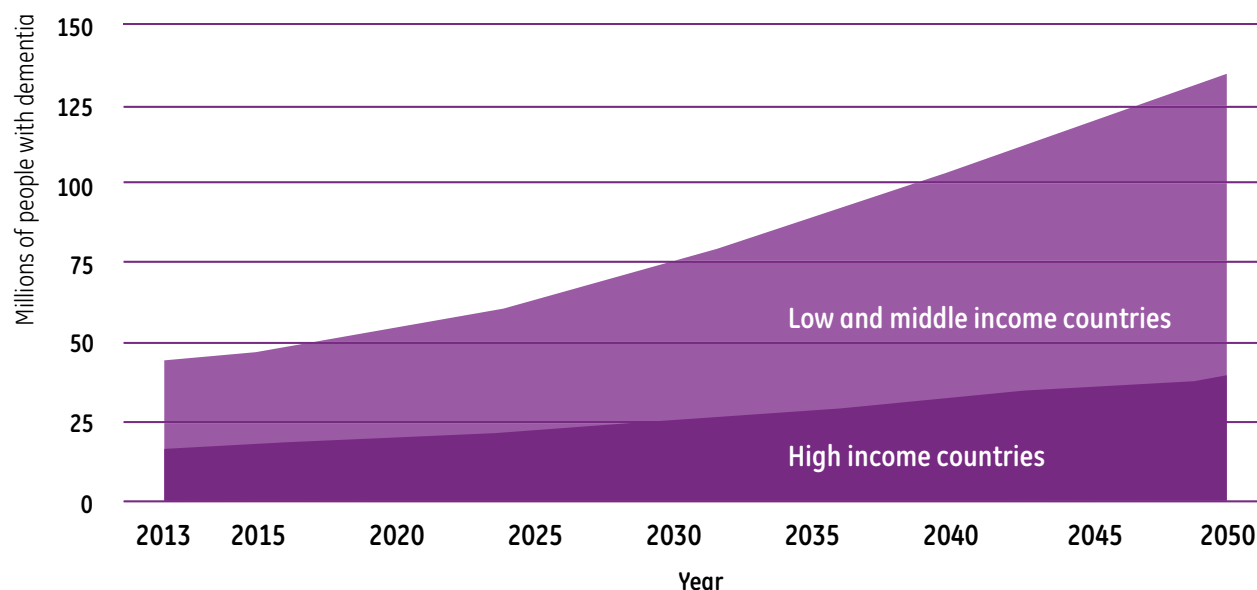
The momentum building on the world stage for solutions to the present – and future – societal impact of Alzheimer's and dementia is due in no small part to this new spirit of global collaboration and cooperation. Johnson is proud of the role being played by the OECD. "People have been trying to make it a global issue in last few years, but it's really taken off in the last eighteen months, I believe largely due to some of the OECD activities

and David Cameron's personal engagement.

"Governments are finally assessing the fiscal burden; the business and manufacturing communities are seeing the effect on their competitiveness, skillset and bottom line; and patient and caregiver advocacy groups are creating awareness of the personal impact. This is an important trend and this is an interesting case study of how that collaboration moves across stakeholders. A prime

example is in terms of the place Alzheimer's is beginning to take in terms of priorities in different countries. Only 13 of 193 WHO countries have national Alzheimer's plans in place. Countries are now beginning to talk to one another about their plans and how to implement them. That was not happening before, and it's a direct result of some of these initiatives. Alzheimer's and dementia are propelling up the global A-list of challenges that demand action."

Number of people with dementia in low and middle income countries compared to high income countries



By 2050, the proportion of people with dementia in low and middle income countries will have increased to 71%.
 Policy Brief for Heads of Government, *The Global Impact of Dementia 2013-2050* Alzheimer's Disease International