

Launch of World Health Organisation (WHO) Dementia guidelines, May 2019.

Many of us will know someone who has had or is currently suffering with dementia. Articles are published regularly in the media outlining treatment and management approaches in development. The National Council for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have published two sets of guidelines: one in 2015 (NG16) concerning mid-life approaches to the delay or prevention of onset of dementia, and the second in 2018 (NG97) on the assessment, management and support for people living with dementia.

Last week the World Health Organisation (WHO) published their own guidelines examining how to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Its key recommendations include:

- The importance of engaging in physical activity;
- Stopping smoking;
- Eating a healthy balanced diet based on a Mediterranean diet;
- Not taking supplements of Vitamin B and E, polyunsaturated fatty acids and multi-complex supplementation;
- Reducing or stopping hazardous and harmful drinking;
- Cognitive training can be helpful;
- Staying socially active – although there is no evidence that this will reduce the risk of dementia onset it is good for general mental health and wellbeing;
- Keeping to a healthy weight and avoiding becoming overweight and/or obese in mid life;
- Ensuring good management of hypertension if it is present;
- Ensuring good management of diabetes in the form of medications and/or lifestyle interventions if it is present;
- Management of dyslipidaemia (elevated cholesterol) at mid-life if it is present;

Many organisations provide support and guidance in the UK and are helpful for signposting to patients/carers and for our own CPD activities. These include Dementia UK (<https://www.dementiauk.org/>) and the Alzheimer's Society (<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>).

References:

Risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia: WHO guidelines. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/312180/9789241550543-eng.pdf?ua=1> (Accessed 15.05.2019)

NICE Guideline NG16. Dementia, disability and frailty in later life – mid-life approaches to delay or prevent onset (2015). <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng16> (Accessed 15.05.2019).

NICE Guideline NG97. Dementia: assessment, management and support for people living with dementia and their carers (2018). <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng97> (Accessed 15.05.2019).