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Abstract ANNA conference November 12th 2021

Ruth Trout

Session title: Brain health: time (*for nurses*) to act

Session subtitle: Rising to the challenge of a forgotten pandemic

Session abstract

Brain health is about making the most of your brain and helping to reduce some of the risks to its health as you age. Reducing the risk of brain disease before symptoms appear is crucial to healthy brain ageing.

Secondary to the evidence-based report *Time Matters: a call to prioritize brain health*, this session addresses the necessity of communicating the risk of brain disease to people during the 'window of opportunity' in mid-life and supporting them in leading a brain-healthy lifestyle to improve outcomes in later life. The main message being that "what's good for the heart is good for the brain." We will discuss how to increase healthcare professional engagement with the guidance to increase public understanding of brain disease prevention.

Session objectives

- To highlight *Think Brain Health Global's* aims and recommendations with a focus on health promotion and preparedness among healthcare professionals (HCPs)
- To raise awareness of neurodegenerative disease risk reduction and that dementia prevention is possible
- To discuss the importance of promoting good brain health for all, including the opportunities to encourage behaviours at all ages that help to improve and prolong brain health
- To consider how best to support and prepare HCPs to communicate risk effectively to people during the 'window of opportunity' in mid-life and support them to lead a brain-healthy lifestyle.
- To consider 'Barriers' and 'Enablers' to promoting brain health in practice.



australasian
neuroscience
nurses
association
movement
disorder
chapter

ANNA & MDC
2021 CONFERENCE
| Localised Connections

Brain health: Time to Act
| Ruth Trout



Brain health: time to act

Rising to the challenge of a forgotten pandemic



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12 November 2021





Brain Health: time to act

- The burden of dementia
- Introduction to *Time matters: a call to prioritize brain health*
- The ‘window of opportunity’
- Barriers and enablers in risk reduction
- Conclusion – what can you do?





The burden of dementia: forgotten pandemic

Dementia is the seventh leading cause of mortality

In 2019, 3.0% of global deaths were attributable to dementia¹



Global dementia rates are increasing



2018:
50 million



2030:
82 million

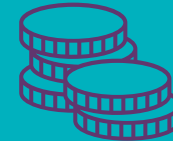


2050:
152 million

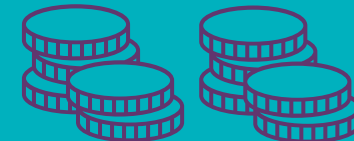
Worldwide, the number of people with dementia is estimated to treble over the next 30 years²

Increasing dementia rates will accentuate the economic burden borne by society

The global economic burden associated with dementia is set to double over the next decade²



2018:
US\$ 1 trillion



2030:
US\$ 2 trillion

Of these totals, approximately 40% is comprised of the cost of informal care by family and friends³

1. WHO global health estimates summary tables. 2019. Available from: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-leading-causes-of-death>; 2. World Alzheimer Report. 2018. Available from: <https://www.alzint.org/u/WorldAlzheimerReport2018.pdf>; 3. Alzheimer's Disease International Report. 2018. Available from: <https://www.alzint.org/u/global-estimates-of-informal-care.pdf>



Why does time matter?



Public awareness

To maximize the potential for early intervention, the general public needs to understand the **modifiable** risk factors that can affect their brain health



Diagnostic development

Biomarkers in development will help to diagnose the underlying cause of dementia early



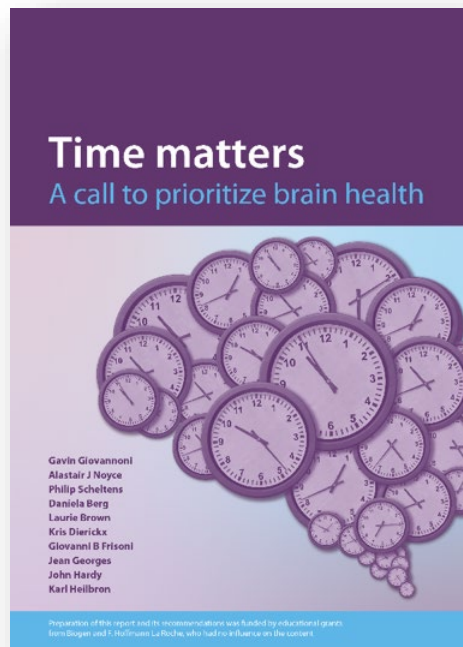
Window of opportunity

Adjustment of modifiable lifestyle factors in **early- to midlife** can significantly help to reduce the risk of developing a neurodegenerative disease



Time matters: a call to prioritize brain health

An expert group developed **evidence-based recommendations** and a **call to action** encouraging positive behaviour change and policies to promote brain health, working towards the prevention of neurodegenerative diseases



Health promotion



Clinical



Research

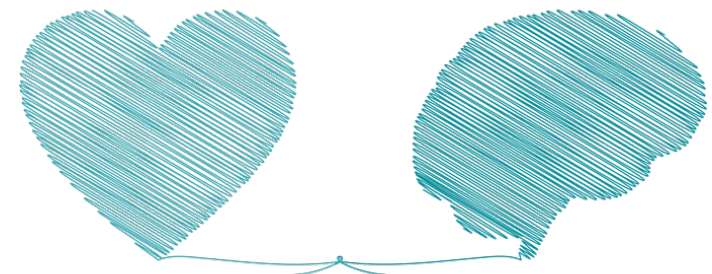


Policymakers and public health bodies should act on these recommendations



- Protect and provide public health budgets which support preventative strategies
- Encourage behaviour to **improve brain health**
- Support and empower individuals to make **lifestyle changes**
- Prepare for (commercial) genetic testing
- Provide **access to available and effective treatments**

***“What’s good for
your heart is good
for your brain”***





Healthcare professionals and administrators should act on these recommendations



- Healthcare professionals and administrators play a key role in the management of people with, or at risk of, a neurodegenerative disease.
- **Identify** people at risk, **communicate** the risk factors to them and help them **develop strategies** to change their risk behaviours
- Refer to **specialist multidisciplinary services** for diagnosis or support
- **Provide follow-up** with ongoing, widely accessible holistic care, including prevention information, treatment options, support with daily activities and long term planning: finances, long term care options, planning a funeral all of which allows people to take some control of a condition they cannot change or cure



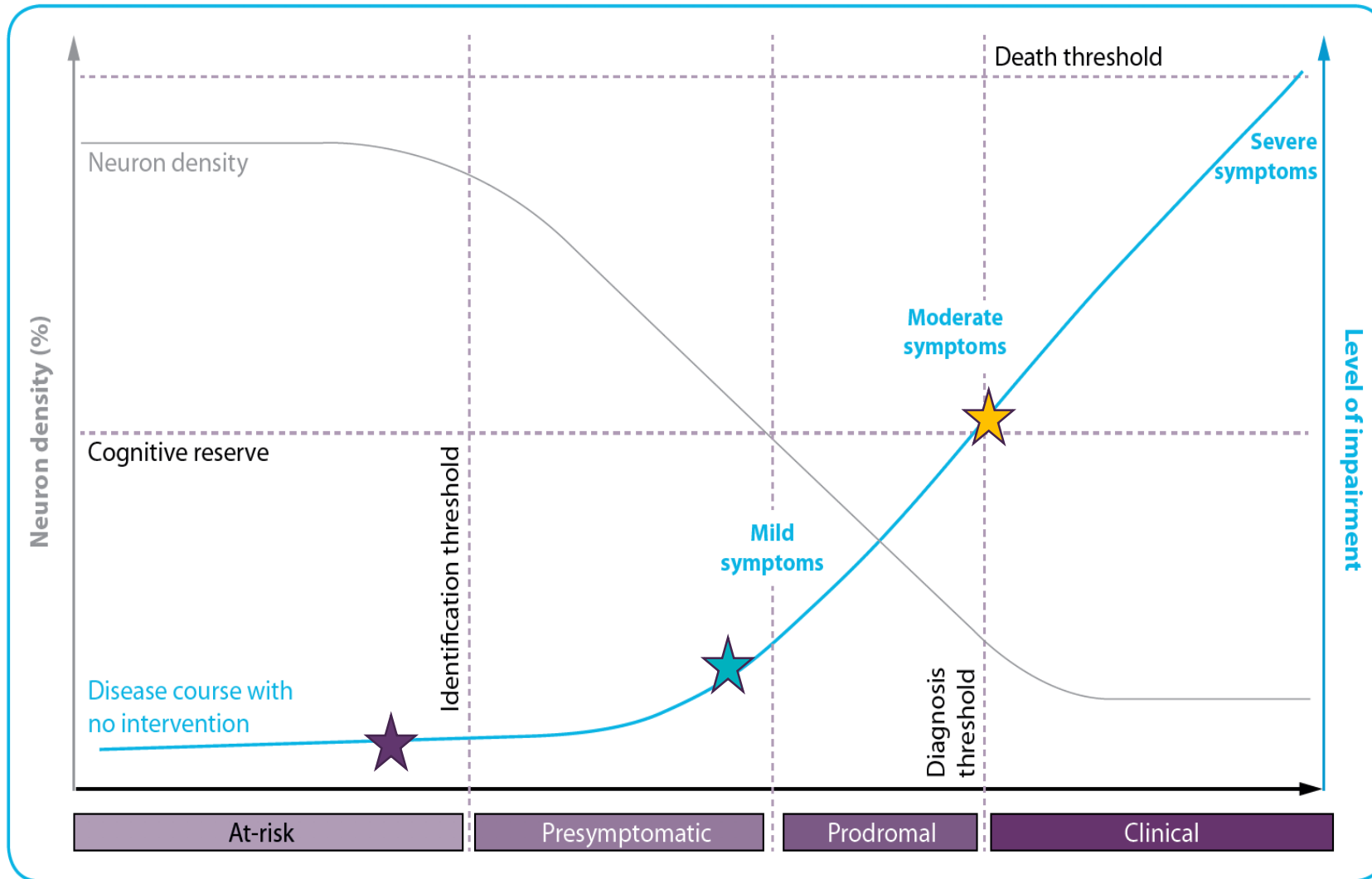
Researchers and organizations that fund scientific research should act on these recommendations



- **Validate diagnostic tools** to accurately and effectively identify people at risk
- **Facilitate earlier disease detection and intervention**
- Priority research goals include:
 - identifying the **effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions** to promote brain health
 - understanding how people with risk factors for a neurodegenerative disease may be **motivated to change their behaviour**
 - assessing the **relative weight of different risk factors** and their interactions



The 'window of opportunity'

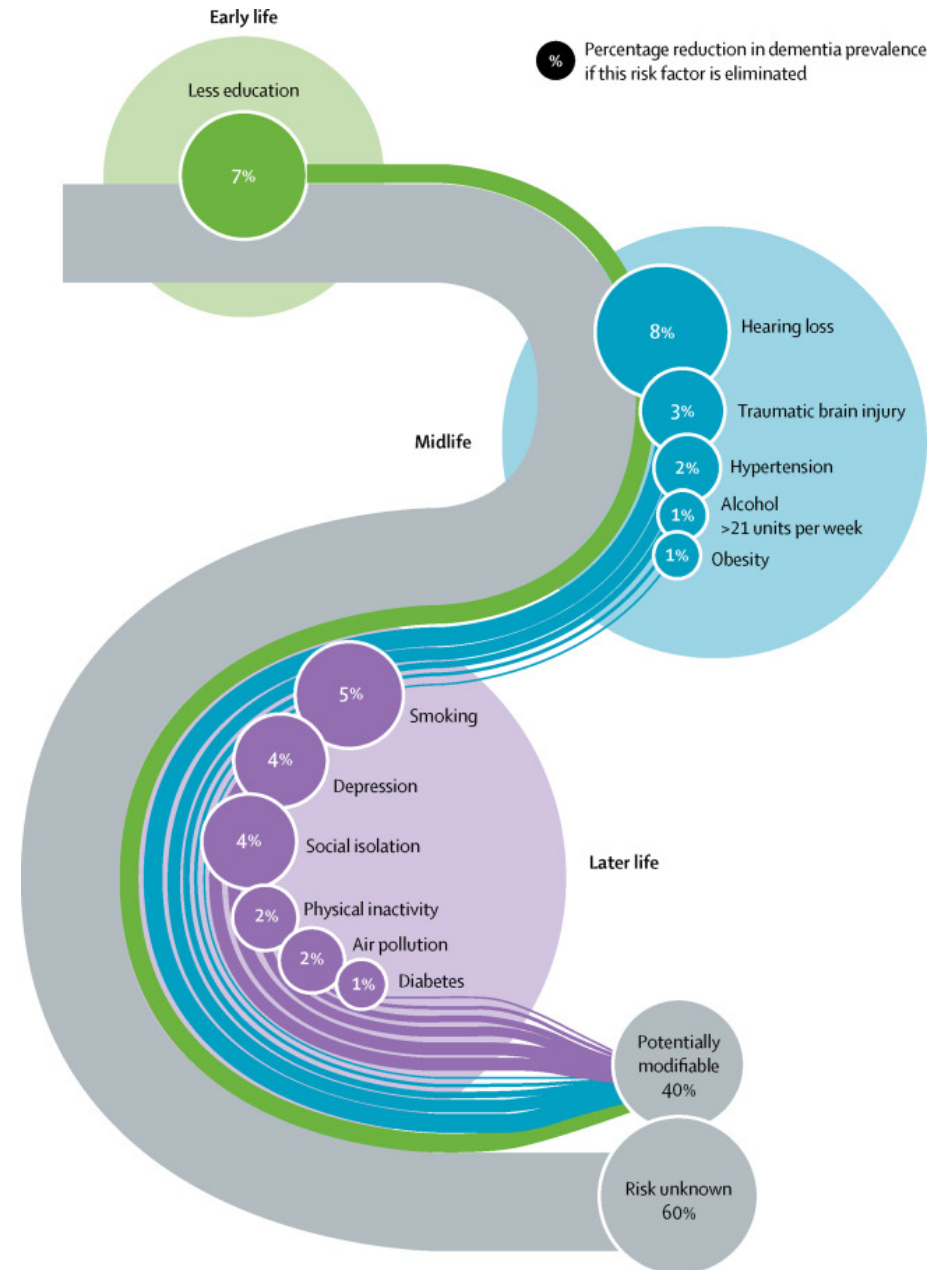


Prevention

- ★ Primary
- ★ Secondary
- ★ Tertiary

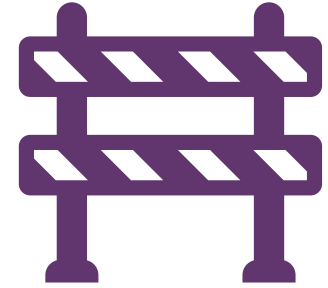


Modifiable risk factors





Barriers to overcome



- Getting the information ‘out there’
- Specialists keep to their specialities, knowledge is therefore not accessible across these and information is siloed
 - Individuals do not see dementia as ‘their role’
- The theory–practice gap
- Issues with infrastructure and training needs
- No specific messaging for brain health to date, for example in head injuries or to proactively address sleep issues or cognitive training



Enablers for success



- Positioning
 - Well placed to discuss the importance of promoting good brain health and we already know a lot of the messages – obesity, healthy diets, exercise, smoking, alcohol, we just need to link them to brain health
 - Numerous opportunities to encourage behaviours at all ages that help to improve and prolong brain health
 - Close relationships with patients which allows us to challenge them to change
 - Already delivering good care to manage lifelong neurodegenerative diseases
- Understanding
 - Frontline and real-world experience that ensures messages are delivered sensitively
 - Knowledge of the practicalities of leading a brain-healthy lifestyle
 - Destigmatisation: dementia is now something that people know about and are prepared to talk about

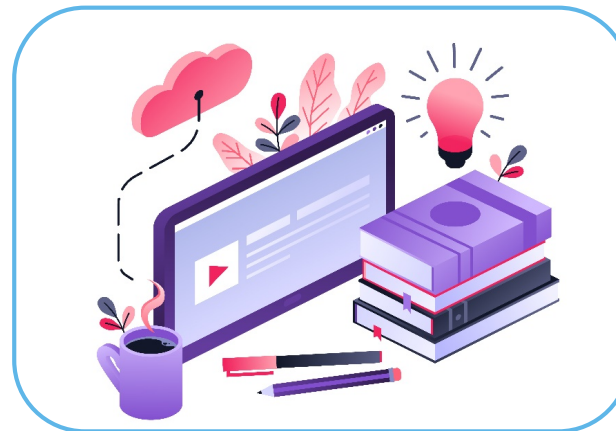


A collaborative effort is needed to achieve our common goals



Behaviour change

The report highlights the need for everyone to prioritize their brain health and to implement behaviours that reduce the risks as they age



Awareness raising

Latest messaging and research around the potential for risk reduction in neurodegenerative diseases needs to be shared



Communication

Specialities need to come together to share knowledge and to capitalize on all teachable moments



What can you do?

- Nurses can:
 - encourage open conversations
 - contribute to facilitating the risk reduction behaviours
 - combine their clinical role with health promotion
 - share these key messages with colleagues

- What change can you make in your practice



Act early



Find out more!



Sign up to our newsletter:
www.thinkbrainhealth.org/

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[@TBHTimeMatters](https://twitter.com/TBHTimeMatters)



[www.linkedin.com/
showcase/think-
brain-health/](http://www.linkedin.com/showcase/think-brain-health/)

Thank you for listening

Any Questions?

