

Alzheimer's disease: why does it matter to everybody and what are we doing about it?

The worldwide prevalence of dementia is doubling every 20 years and will reach 100 million by mid century. The commonest cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease (AD), a progressive brain disease in which brain tissue is lost progressively and which causes profound loss of abilities, leading to almost complete dependency over 3-15 years.

At present there are no proven means to prevent or delay the onset of AD, which will affect one in five people before the end of their lives. Current palliative drug treatments are slightly helpful and there are proven interventions to assist caregivers, but there is an urgent need to develop new therapies that can arrest or delay the progress of this disease before permanent damage is caused.

This talk will address recent developments in early detection of AD via blood, brain scan and spinal fluid tests, review some of the progress made in the past 2 decades, and will give an indication of likely areas where significant advances should be made in the next one or two decades.

David Ames, who will give the lecture is a world authority on dementia and leads Australia's largest AD research study.