I am delighted to announce that the call for abstracts has been launched for the 31st Alzheimer Europe Conference and registrations are open. It has been decided that the conference will be held as a virtual event, under the banner “Resilience in dementia: Moving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic”. Our Bucharest conference will now take place in 2022. You can send abstracts until 30 June and Early Bird registration is available until 15 September.

Our 2021 ethics working group, which is addressing sex, gender and sexuality in the context of dementia, met for the first time in April, at a virtual meeting chaired by Director for Projects Dianne Gove. Members of the group hail from several different countries, have different gender and sexual identities, different backgrounds and specialisms, and some are living with dementia. The target audience of the 2021 report and recommendations will be policy makers, and health and social care students and providers.

On the policy front, we have published responses to the World Health Organisation (WHO) discussion paper on the development of a global action plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders, and to the EU Green Paper on Ageing. I am also pleased to announce that a paper, co-authored by Alzheimer Europe and looking at the contribution of the European Working Group of People with Dementia to the ROADMAP project, has been published in the Journal of Health Expectations. 

Regarding the WHO discussion paper, we asked how the new plan would align with other areas of work such as the global action plan on dementia and pointed out, among other things, the scale of the challenge posed by dementia and the importance of taking a disease-specific approach, rather than a “catch all”. The European Commission published its Green Paper on Ageing earlier this year, as part of its work around demographic change in the EU, thereby launching a policy debate around the challenges and opportunities presented by ageing demographics. Our response aims to ensure that the specific needs of people with dementia are addressed.

Still at the EU level, the European Parliament has formally approved the Horizon Europe 2021-2027 research and innovation programme. The programme was provisionally put in place by the European Commission at the start of 2021, but MEPs have now accorded their final approval. Horizon Europe will have an overall budget of EUR 95.5 billion, including EUR 5.4 billion from the Next Generation EU recovery plan and an additional investment of EUR 4 billion from the multiannual financial framework.

Last but by no means least, I would like to welcome a new organisation, Dementia Lithuania, to the European dementia movement. Lithuania is one of few countries in the EU without a national dementia plan, so Dementia Lithuania was formed in early 2021, to try to move things forward and to represent people living with dementia and their carers, locally and internationally. We look forward to working alongside them!
COVID-19 SITUATION

1 April: Survey of older migrants in Finland underlines the importance of accessible information on COVID-19 vaccination

Similar to many EU countries, vaccinations against COVID-19 have been available in Finland since the end of December 2020. A recent survey carried out by the Finnish Multicultural Memory Centre (MUKES) highlighted the importance of overcoming language barriers to ensure accessibility of information and services to older minority ethnic and/or migrant groups. In their new report, MUKES evaluate whether this language barrier also impedes access by these groups to COVID-19 vaccination information and services.

Together with their Working Group of 6 organisations supporting older people from migrant and/or minority ethnic backgrounds, MUKES performed telephone interviews with 121 individuals aged over 50 in Finland, speaking 9 different native languages including Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Estonian. Many of those surveyed did not speak Finnish or English. Whilst almost half were keen to be vaccinated, many respondents wanted more information on the safety and benefits of the vaccine to make a decision. In addition, many respondents felt that they had not received enough information on how vaccinations were being organised in their local area. Over half the respondents stated that they would need support to obtain information and book appointments for vaccination, with many indicating that they would prefer to receive information about these aspects by letter, and in their native language. Vaccine preferences appeared to vary depending on the language grouping of respondents. For example, Russian-speaking respondents stated that they would prefer to receive Sputnik V, while Chinese speakers were more confident in vaccines made in their own country.


6 April: Clinical study shows that COVID-19 raises the risk of psychiatric and neurological disorders

Accumulating evidence indicates that neurological conditions including dementia are associated with an increased risk of severe COVID-19. A new clinical study now suggests that the inverse may also be true, showing that people who have had COVID-19 may be at increased risk of developing depression, stroke and dementia among other conditions.

In their study, published in Lancet Psychiatry on 6 April, a team of researchers led by Prof. Paul Harrison (University of Oxford, UK) probed a large dataset obtained from a US-based electronic health record network. The TriNetX Analytics Network includes data from over 81 million individuals, collecting demographic details, clinical information and data on inpatient and outpatient care. They examined three groups of individuals: those who were diagnosed with COVID-19, a matched control group of people who were diagnosed with influenza, and a further matched control group of people who were diagnosed with respiratory tract infections.

Focusing on a time period between January and December 2020, the researchers searched the records for diagnoses of 14 different neurological or psychiatric conditions, including depression, stroke, Parkinson’s disease, encephalitis and dementia. Among over 236,000 people diagnosed with COVID-19 during this time period, over 33% received a psychiatric or neurological diagnosis within 6 months, with 12.84% receiving their first diagnosis. The most common diagnosis overall was anxiety disorder, affecting over 17% of individuals. COVID-19 severity influenced the likelihood of diagnosis: people who had been admitted to intensive care and/or experienced delirium due to COVID-19 were at greater risk compared to those who had not been hospitalised. For example, 2.66% of people aged over 65 years received a first diagnosis of dementia after recovering from COVID-19, increasing to 4.72% of those who had delirium due to COVID-19. More extended studies are now required, to see whether this increased risk remains in the longer term.

https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2821%2900084-520

20 April: New research underlines the importance of adapting and simplifying public health measures for people with dementia

Since March 2020, public health measures designed to prevent COVID-19 transmission have become the "new normal" for many countries in Europe. Ranging from mask wearing and enhanced handwashing to full lockdown and shielding, these...
measures have successfully reduced the spread of COVID-19. As the COVID-19 pandemic waxes and wanes, so, too, have the public health measures designed to limit its spread; countries have moved from full lockdown, to the reopening of shops and businesses, then back again when case numbers rise once more.

The ever-changing nature of public health measures against COVID-19 can make them hard to comprehend for people with cognitive impairments, such as people living with dementia. In a study published on 20 April in BMC Public Health, Dr Clarissa Giebel, Prof. Mark Gabbay and colleagues interviewed unpaid carers and people living with dementia, exploring their understanding and adherence to COVID-19 public health restrictions.

Interviewing 50 unpaid carers and 8 people with dementia in April-July 2020, the researchers identified five key themes, including confusion & limited comprehension; putting oneself in danger; and adherence to restrictions in wider society. Many carers perceived a lack of comprehension of the public health measures in the person with dementia they care for, which often caused distress or frustration. People with dementia who didn't have a good comprehension of restrictions did not always comply with them, occasionally placing themselves in dangerous situations and increasing carer stress. Conversely, when people with dementia had a good comprehension of public health measures they were able to comply with them. Together, these findings indicate that in the more advanced stages of dementia, people can find it hard to retain new and frequently-changing information about public health measures. Public health measures should be implemented in a way that improves comprehension by people with dementia, for example by providing more frequent reminders, in appropriate language.

https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-10815-8

21 April: Alzheimer Uniti completes study on impact of COVID-19 restrictions on people with dementia and carers

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused big changes for families, in the way that people live their daily lives and in their emotional and social relationships. People with dementia have been heavily impacted by isolation, resulting in changes in established routines and contributing to the onset or worsening of behavioural and psychological manifestations (anxiety, irritability, aggression) and of cognitive disorders, creating a greater workload and higher stress levels for carers. Conversely, it is known that maintaining a daily routine based on simplified and sequential activities has a reassuring effect both for people with dementia and for those around them.

Alzheimer Uniti has completed a study, observing 160 persons with dementia in various districts of Lazio, 91% with Alzheimer’s and 9% with vascular and other kinds of dementia: 60% women (median age 81) and 40% men (median age 77); 22 with mild dementia, 76 with moderate and 62 with severe dementia. Before the lockdown, 16% still went out independently, 81% would go out accompanied and 3% never went out.

During the period of forced isolation, they stayed in touch by telephone and by sending videos as a guide for daily activities with cognitive, motor and occupational stimulation.

About 100 days after the lockdown, the impact on their lives was assessed by a questionnaire given by telephone to carers by Alzheimer Uniti psychologists. It showed that cognitive symptoms worsened in 54% of the study participants, especially in language and episodes of confusion. Behavioural symptoms worsened in 53% of the people and decline in motor skills was also observed. Nevertheless, 72% of the carers stated that there was no change in their relationship with the person, and 9% said that the forced proximity improved the relationship. Only 10% of the group had to go to the emergency room. 142 caregivers stated that there was no change in their relationship with Alzheimer Uniti was very useful and significant.

There is no doubt that this disruptive time has greatly affected the clinical course of the disease and people’s quality of life, but distance support has helped to mitigate behavioural and psychological disorders. This support has also reduced some anxiety and uncertainty among carers. Nothing, however, can replace face-to-face contact.

ALZHEIMER EUROPE

2 April: Alzheimer Europe responds to WHO discussion paper

Alzheimer Europe has responded to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) discussion paper on the development of a global action plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders. In November 2020, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted resolution WHA 73.10 instructing the WHO to develop a global action
A plan to address the challenges and gaps in providing care and services for people with epilepsy and neurological disorders. As the first step, the WHO Secretariat developed and published a discussion paper, setting out the overarching strategic aims and vision for the action plan, inviting Member States and other interested organisations to submit feedback. Alzheimer Europe developed a response highlighting a number of areas including:

- How the new plan would align with other areas of work, including the WHO global action plan on dementia.
- Disease specific vs. “catch all” policies.
- The challenges in the categorisation of dementia.
- The scale of the challenge posed by dementia.

You can read our response here:


8 April: Cindy Birck co-authors article on astrocytes, the major cell of the central nervous system

On 8 April, Alzheimer Europe received word that the paper “NF-κB and TNF Affect the Astrocytic Differentiation from Neural Stem Cells” has been published in the special issue NF-κB in Stem Cells and the Nervous System: From Embryonal Development to Adulthood of the journal Cells.

The first author of this article is Project Officer Cindy Birck. This paper is focused on the major cell of the central nervous system called astrocytes and includes findings of Cindy’s PhD thesis entitled “Astrocyte phenotype during differentiation: implication of the NF-κB pathway”, conducted at the University of Luxembourg.

Congratulations to all, on this publication!

https://doi.org/10.3390/cells10040840

14 April: Alzheimer Europe’s ethics working group on sex, gender and sexuality holds its kick-off meeting

On 14 April 2021, Alzheimer Europe held its kick-off meeting for the ethics working group, which this year will be addressing sex, gender and sexuality in the context of dementia. Members of the working group were from several different countries and included people with and without dementia, with different gender and sexual identities, and with backgrounds in research, service provision, policy, psychology, nursing, philosophy, economics and living with dementia. Because of the pandemic, it was a virtual meeting and therefore relatively short, but the members of the group covered a range of important issues, defined the potential scope of the work and discussed some overriding guiding frameworks such as intersectionality, heteronormativity, micro-aggressions and risk aversion. It was agreed that the target audience of the future report and recommendations would be policy makers, and health and social care students and providers, because they are the ones who can make the necessary changes to improve the lived experience of people with dementia of all sexes, genders and gender/sexual identities.

The group is chaired by Dianne Gove and the members include Jean Georges (from Alzheimer Europe), Annemarie Schumacher Dimech (from Switzerland), Lucie Hájková and Martina Málová (from the Czech Republic), Fabrice Gzil (from France), Helga Rohra (from Germany), Charles Scerri and Anthony Scerri (from Malta), Linn Sandberg and Karin Westerlund (from Sweden) and Phil Harper, Patrick Ettenes, Andrea Capstick and Aileen Beatty (from the United Kingdom).

Follow us on Twitter
Alzheimer Europe has responded to the consultation concerning the EU’s Green Paper on Ageing. In January 2021, as part of its work around demographic change in the EU, the European Commission published its “Green Paper on Ageing”, launching a broad policy debate to discuss the challenges and opportunities from ageing demographics, tying into the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UN Decade for Healthy Ageing. Competences for dealing with the effects of ageing largely reside with Member States, however, the EU is well placed to identify key issues and trends, as well as supporting action through its programmes.

Alzheimer Europe has submitted a response to the consultation on the Green Paper, identifying a broad range of topics and themes, to ensure that the specific needs of people with dementia were addressed. The response highlights:

- Best-practices identified in the second Joint Action on Dementia (2016-2019) which address key issues relating to ageing demographics.
- Challenges and difficulties regarding the availability of supports and services for people with dementia, especially in rural communities.
- The need for programmes such as EU4Health and Horizon Europe how to focus on improving healthcare systems, particularly in relation to dementia.
- The potential role of the EU and its relevant bodies in supporting implementation of the UNCRPD, Charter of Social Rights, the ECHR etc.
- The disproportionate effect on women, both as carers and people with dementia, in relation to social security and pensions systems.

You can our full response to the consultation:
https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/Policy/Our-opinion-on/EU-Green-Paper-on-Ageing

30 April: Call for abstracts and early bird registration now open for 31st Alzheimer Europe Conference

We are delighted to invite you to submit abstracts and register for the upcoming 31st Annual Conference of Alzheimer Europe #31AEC, which will now be held as a virtual conference, under the banner “Resilience in dementia: Moving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic”. Following the success of our first ever virtual conference in 2020, we look forward to welcoming delegates and speakers to our second virtual conference from 29 November to 1 December 2021.

Our Bucharest conference “Building Bridges” has been postponed to next year and will take place from 5-7 December 2022.

Call for abstracts

Alzheimer Europe is calling for abstracts for oral, quick oral and poster presentations on the following subjects:

- Adapting day and community care
- Learning the lessons of COVID-19 in nursing and residential care
- Maintaining dementia as a public health priority
- Mental health and dementia during the pandemic
- New ways of diagnosing dementia and of recruiting and assessing research participants
- Telecare and counselling

Societal and medical perspectives:

- Arts and culture
- Gender and sexuality
- Intergenerational dementia initiatives
- Rehabilitation in dementia
- Risk factors and prevention
Alzheimer Europe is also calling for quick oral and poster presentations on the following subjects:

- Young onset dementia
- Awareness campaigns
- Dementia-friendly initiatives
- Initiatives supporting minority ethnic groups
- Legal and ethical issues
- Post-diagnostic support
- Psychosocial interventions

The call for abstracts will close on 30 June 2021.

Early bird registration
Take advantage of the early bird registration fees until 15 September 2021. Register now and benefit from the reduced registration fee of EUR 75 instead of EUR 125.

Alzheimer Europe networking (online)

Between 29 March and 23 April, Kate participated in Brain Health Scotland’s online course on "Understanding Brain Health: Preventing Dementia".

On 1 April, Jean had a meeting with Roche.
On 6 April, Dianne presented at the ethics meeting "Journée essais cliniques Alzheimer".
On 6 April, Ana, Dianne and Jean attended the EWGPWD consultation with Roche.
On 7 April, the Alzheimer Europe Board met.
On 8 April, Dianne, Ana and Jean attended the EWGPWD consultation with OptiChronix.
On 8 April, Jean had a meeting with Biogen.
On 9 April, Jean had a meeting with the European Patients’ Forum.
On 12 April, Ange attended a NEURONET NeuroCohort taskforce meeting.
On 12 April, Ana attended a meeting with Biogen.
On 13 April, Jean attended a meeting between the European Commission and the European Patients’ Forum to discuss operating grants under the EU health programme.
On 13 April, Ange attended a Lygature webinar on joint controllers in large consortia.
On 14 April, Alzheimer Europe organised the first meeting of its working group on sex, gender and sexuality.
On 14 April, Jean attended the Management Board meeting of the Dementia Panel of the European Academy of Neurology.
On 14 April, Ana participated in the Patient Engagement Open Forum.
On 15 April, Dianne met with the DZNE and Robert Bosch Stiftung.
On 15 April, Owen attended a meeting of the EU4Health Civil Society Alliance.
On 16 April, Jean attended the Biogen Patient Advisory Group meeting.
On 19 and 20 April, Ange attended an EMA/HMA joint workshop on AI in medicines regulation.
On 20 April, Ana, Dianne and Jean attended a RADAR-AD webinar on preliminary results.
On 20 April, Jean attended a meeting of the European Union Geriatric Medicine Society.
On 20 April, Owen attended an online webinar hosted by the European Brain Council on the place of Brain Health in EU policy.
On 21 April, Dianne attended a meeting for a proposed early researcher network project.
On 21 April, Dianne and Ana met with Roche.
On 21 April, Ana, Dianne & Ange attended a meeting with Eodyne for the VirtualBrainCloud project.
On 21 and 22 April, Ange attended the 2021 NIH Alzheimer’s Research Summit.
On 22 April, Ange and Jean attended the Virtual General Assembly Meeting of the VirtualBrainCloud project.
On 22 April, Ana and Dianne attended a meeting for the RADAR-AD proposed extension.
On 22 April, Dianne met with the DISTINCT management team.
On 23 April, Jean met with EFPIA.
On 23 April, Owen attended the online session of the Annual General Assembly of the European Disability Forum (EDF).
On 23 April, Ana and Jean met with the University of East Anglia to discuss a project application.
On 26 April, Ana and Dianne attended a meeting for a project proposal.
On 27 April, Jean attended a Roche Patient Advisory Group meeting.
On 28 April, Jean met with Roche.
On 28 April, Ange attended a DataSavesLives meeting on the development of a health data toolkit.
On 28 April, Jean and Owen attended a meeting with EPF and other civil society organisations to discuss EU Operating Grants.
On 29 April, Jean had a meeting with Biogen.
On 29 April, Dianne, Ana and Angela attended the EWGPWD consultation with Eodyne for the Virtual Brain Project.
On 29 April, Cindy attended the online event “Brain health, the next challenge of the 21st century” organised by The Brussels Times with the support of EBRAINS.
On 30 April, Jean met with EFPIA.

EU PROJECTS

30 March: PRIME project hosts a webinar on the clinical aspects of neurodevelopmental disorders

The EU-funded PRIME project is investigating whether disturbances in insulin signalling in the brain are linked to different neurodevelopmental and neurodegenerative disorders, using a wide range of scientific and clinical approaches. On 30 March, PRIME organised a webinar to inform project collaborators (including students, researchers and data scientists) about the clinical aspects of neurodevelopmental disorders, focusing on attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

During the webinar, Prof. Jan Buitelaar of Radboud University Medical Centre delivered a presentation that reviewed the clinical characteristics of these neurodevelopmental disorders, discussing their symptoms at onset, outlining how they develop over time and highlighting common treatments. While they share certain similarities, including the early age for onset and genetic risk factors, there are also differences, such as the types of behaviour that are demonstrated by people living with ADHD, OCD or ASD. In PRIME, researchers are now working to unravel the biological mechanisms that might account for these similarities and differences, aiming to understand the contribution of insulin and how this relates to other brain disorders including Alzheimer’s disease.

https://prime-study.eu/

30-31 March: RADAR-AD project members gather online for the second annual consortium meeting to discuss progress and future plans

The annual RADAR-AD meeting provides consortium members from various work streams with the opportunity to come together and present the progress of their work, share challenges and discuss future ideas.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s meeting was organised in a virtual setting on the 30-31 March 2021. In total, 50 project members participated in the online event. The meeting included sessions on clinical study progress, the work on modelling, the data platform and remote monitoring devices, as well as ethical and regulatory work, patient engagement, and the next steps for action.

Read the full news story, here:

3 April: EPAD project publishes a paper investigating the ATN classification scheme in a population without dementia

A new article from the European Prevention of Alzheimer's Dementia (EPAD) consortium
entitled “Application of the ATN classification scheme in a population without dementia: Findings from the EPAD cohort” has recently been published in Alzheimer’s & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer’s Association.

The ATN framework is a method to classify and characterise Alzheimer’s disease through evaluation of β amyloid deposition (A), pathologic tau (T), and neurodegeneration (N). In this article, the ATN classification was operationalized in the first 1500 participants consented in the EPAD cohort, a deeply phenotyped cohort of individuals who do not have dementia. Congratulations to the authors! You can read the paper here.

The ATN classification has been added for public use to the analytical database of the EPAD Longitudinal Cohort Study (LCS). This analytical database includes all of the clinical, cognitive and biomarker measurements of recruited participants according to the EPAD LCS protocol, collected and curated according to high quality standards. EPAD has made this database open access and publicly available to the research community. To access to it, please visit the EPAD website:

http://ep-ad.org/

3 April: AMYPAD publishes three new papers

The AMYPAD Consortium has recently announced the publication of three new papers:

- “Parametric imaging of dual-time window [18F]flutemetamol and [18F]florbetaben studies”, NeuroImage
- “Early detection of amyloid load using 18F-florbetaben PET”, Alzheimer’s Research & Therapy
- “White matter microstructure disruption in early stage amyloid pathology”, Alzheimer’s & Dementia: Diagnosis, Assessment & Disease Monitoring.

Congratulations to the authors! You can find the papers on the AMYPAD website:

https://amypad.eu/resources/publications/

7 April: ABOARD project aims to stop Alzheimer’s before it starts

“Stopping Alzheimer’s before it starts” - This is the slogan of a new, nationwide, collaborative project in the Netherlands, led by Wiesje van der Flier from Alzheimer Center Amsterdam. ABOARD, short for “A personalized medicine approach for Alzheimer’s disease”, is a public-private project which aims to prepare for a future in which Alzheimer’s disease (AD) is stopped before dementia has started. This is realised by: improving timely and accurate diagnosis, developing individualised risk profiles, initiating nationwide data collection, with a focus on patient-reported outcomes, and a focus on prevention strategies by creating awareness around dementia and brain health. In addition, the readiness of the Dutch healthcare system for disease-modifying treatment will be evaluated. The ABOARD project has a duration of five years.

ABoard takes the fact that AD develops over a period of over twenty years, as its starting point. The project is therefore focusing on the stages before the onset of dementia, working towards prevention. In addition, AD is highly heterogeneous, both in its underlying biology and specific pathways involved, and in the needs and preferences of patients and their carers. The wishes and needs of patients should be the starting point of care and ABOARD will develop (e-)tools to support patient-orchestrated care. Realising that one size does not fit all, ABOARD envisions a future with individualised prevention encompassing tailored combinations of lifestyle- and disease-modifying interventions.

Over 30 partners representing the entire translational value chain are working together in the ABOARD project. Partners include the five Dutch Alzheimer Centres, Alzheimer Nederland and partners from academic and applied research, healthcare, private, semi-private and public organisations, all dedicated to achieve personalised medicine for AD.

Jean Georges, Executive Director of Alzheimer Europe is on the Advisory Board of this exciting new initiative.

More information about ABOARD, including an animation-video, can be found on the website:

www.aboard-project.nl

15 April: MOPEAD project publishes paper on the identification of undiagnosed dementia cases using a web-based pre-screening tool

On 15 April, researchers from the Innovative Medicines Initiative-funded MOPEAD project published a paper on the identification of undiagnosed dementia cases using a web-based pre-screening tool in the journal Alzheimer’s & Dementia.

The overall aim of the MOPEAD study was to assess different Patient Engagement models across Europe, to identify efficient approaches of earlier identification of mild Alzheimer’s disease (AD) dementia and prodromal AD patients.

As part of this, project collaborators developed a marketing campaign and a web-based pre-screening tool. Participants who showed signs of possible cognitive impairment were invited to memory clinics for a harmonized clinical evaluation across all study sites.

The team reported that 1.487 individuals completed the pre-screening, out of which 547 were identified to be at risk of dementia. Furthermore, the researchers report that among the subset of 91 participants who received a positive pre-screening and underwent the full clinical evaluation at one
of the memory clinics, 49 (53.8%) were diagnosed with either mild cognitive impairment or AD.
The paper therefore concludes that the web-based pre-screening tool showed to be a valid strategy to identify so far undiagnosed people with cognitive impairment.
Read the full paper here: https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.12297

**20 April: LETHÉ communication team publishes info graphic showcasing mission and project aims to develop a personalized intervention for dementia prevention**

On 20 April, the communication team of the LETHÉ project released their first info graphic, which has also been translated into German.
The graphic emphasizes general information on LETHÉ (A personalized prediction and intervention model for early detection and reduction of risk factors causing dementia, based on AI and distributed Machine Learning), introduces the project and its mission.
Its aim is to raise interest in the project and provide a first step towards engaging potential study participants.

LETHÉ has been set out to provide a data-driven risk factor prediction model for older individuals at risk of cognitive decline building upon big data analysis of cross-sectional observational and longitudinal intervention datasets from 4 clinical centres in Europe including the 11-years analysis of the FINGER study. LETHÉ aims to establish novel digital biomarkers, for early detection of risk factors, based on nonobtrusive ICT-based passive and active monitoring. The goal is to establish a digital-enabled intervention for cognitive decline prevention based on the evolution of a successful protocol (FINGER) evolving into an ICT based preventive lifestyle intervention through individualized profiling, personalized recommendations, feedback and support (FINGER 2.0), well targeted on a population stratified by cost-effective biological biomarkers. The LETHÉ solution will be tested in a feasibility study validating the achieved improvements.

Take a look at the infographic on the website: www.tinyurl.com/LETHE-infographic

**20 April: Horizon 2020-funded VirtualBrainCloud project hosts an online General Assembly meeting**

On 22 April, the H2020-funded VirtualBrainCloud project (TVB_Cloud) held its General Assembly meeting online, summarizing recent project developments and discussing upcoming plans. Chaired by Prof. Petra Ritter, who is leading the project, the meeting was attended by over 40 project participants, including representatives from the 17 institutions and organisations that make up the TVB_Cloud consortium.

Jean Georges (Executive Director) and Angela Bradshaw (Project Officer) represented Alzheimer Europe at the meeting.
The primary objective of TVB_Cloud is to create a decision support system for clinicians, formed around a cloud platform for personalised brain simulations based on high-quality, multidisciplinary clinical data, encompassing EEG and MRI scans, -omics and blood-based biomarker data. This decision support system will enhance the early diagnosis, prognosis and personalised treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, with an initial focus on Alzheimer’s disease (AD).

During the TVB_Cloud General Assembly (GA) meeting, TVB_Cloud workpackage leaders provided summaries of ongoing activities on data processing and FAIRification, the construction of AD disease progression models, computational aspects of personalised, multiscale brain simulations, and the software development that underlies these activities. Progress updates were provided on a number of important deliverables that will be completed in the coming months, including a list of candidate mechanisms that could be used in personalised brain simulations. The next GA will be hosted in September.


**22 April: DISTINCT project researchers find that technology may help maintain positive social interactions between people with dementia and their caregivers**

In the sphere where dementia research meets innovations, there exists a potential in technology that can support something as seemingly trivial as “better conversations”. Researchers working in the DISTINCT project explored what technology-driven solutions show promise in facilitating communication and social interactions between people with dementia and their formal or informal caregivers. Their findings were recently published in the journal BMC Geriatrics.
The impact of dementia for communication skills can result in difficulties for people with dementia in keeping up in conversations as the conditions progresses, and the conversation partner might struggle to keep up meaningful exchanges. Photo albums, games and pet therapy are tools that already provide support, but technological devices can potentially offer more diverse and dynamic activities. The
researchers found that by inviting technology into social interactions, it could serve as an icebreaker, increase the frequency and duration of social interactions, help the caregiver better understand the person with dementia, and reduce the pressure on the conversation partner to find topics to talk about.

Dementia research that includes the role of technology in social health encompasses devices ranging from tablet- or computer-based activities, social robots and even 3D-printing. However, the majority of the social interventions using technology to promote social interactions and support “better conversations” are small-scale studies at this point. Nonetheless, the researchers found great potential in technology that promotes social interaction in a way that relieves strain on the caregiver, enhances relationships and engages people with dementia in social activities. Robust research is still needed to confirm these findings.


EU project acknowledgements

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LETHE – grant agreement 101017405
MOPEAD – grant agreement 115985
PRIME - grant agreement 847879
RADAR-AD - grant agreement 806999
VirtualBrainCloud – grant agreement 826421

Members of the European Alzheimer’s Alliance

Currently, the total number of MEPs in the Alliance stands at 92, representing 26 Member States of the European Union and six out of seven political groups in the European Parliament. Alzheimer Europe would like to thank the following MEPs for their support of the European Alzheimer’s Alliance (EAA):

**Austria**: Monika Vana (Greens/EFA). **Belgium**: Frédérique Ries (Renew Europe); Kathleen van Brempt (S&D); Hilde Vautmans (Renew Europe). **Bulgaria**: Radan Kanev (EPP); Andrey Kovatchev (EPP); Ilian Kyuchyuk (Renew Europe); Tsvetelina Penkova (S&D); Sergei Stanichev (S&D). **Croatia**: Biljana Borzan (S&D); Tonino Picula (S&D); Ruža Tomašić (ECR). **Cyprus**: Costas MAVrides (S&D). **Czech Republic**: Tomáš Zdechovsky (EPP). **Denmark**: Margrete Auken (Greens/EFA); Christel Schaldemose (S&D). **Estonia**: Umaras Paet (Renew Europe); **Finland**: Alviina Alametsä (Greens/EFA); Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA); Miepeta Kumpula-Natri (S&D); Sirpa Pietikäinen (S&D). **France**: François-Xavier Bellamy (EPP); Dominique Bilde (I&D); Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé (EPP); Arnaud Danjean (EPP); Geoffroy Didier (EPP); Agnes Evren (EPP); Sylvie Guillaume (S&D); Brice Hortefeux (EPP); Nadine Morano (EPP); Dominique Riquet (Renew Europe); Anne Sander (EPP); Chrysoula Zacharapoulou (Renew). **Germany**: Alexandra Geese (Greens/EFA); Erik Marquardt (Greens/EFA); Angelika Niebler (EPP); Terry Reintke (Greens/EFA). **Greece**: Manolis Kefalogiannis (EPP); Stelios Koulouglou (GUE-NGL); Dimitrios Papadimoulis (GUE-NGL); Maria Sypri (EPP); Elissavet Vozemberg (EPP). **Hungary**: Tamás Deutsch (EPP); Ádám Kósa (EPP). **Ireland**: Barry Andrews (ALDE); Deirdre Clune (NI); Ciarán Cuffe (Greens/EFA), Clare Daly (GUE-NGL); Frances Fitzgerald (EPP); Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan (GUE-NGL); Billy Kelleher (Renew Europe); Seán Kelly (EPP); Grace O’Sullivan (Greens/EFA). **Italy**: Isabella Adinolfi (NI); Brando Benifei (S&D); Pierfrancesco Majorino (S&D); Aldo Patriciello (EPP); Patrizia Toia (S&D). **Lithuania**: Vilija Blinkевичius (S&D). **Luxembourg**: Marc Angel (S&D); Charles Goerens (Renew Europe); Christophe Hansen (EPP); Tilly Metz (Greens, EFA); Isabel Wiseler-Lima (EPP). **Malta**: Roberta Metsola (EPP); Alfred Sant (S&D). **Netherlands**: Jeroen Lenaers (EPP); Annie Schreijer-Pierik (EPP). **Poland**: Elżbieta Łukacijewska (EPP); Jan Olbrycht (EPP). **Portugal**: Sara Cerdas (S&D); José Gusmão (GUE/NGL); Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL); Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar (EPP); Manuel Pizarro (S&D). **Romania**: Cristian-Silviu Busoi (EPP); Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP). **Slovakia**: Ivan Stefanec (EPP). **Slovenia**: Franc Bogovič (EPP); Milan Brglez (S&D); Tanja Fajon (S&D); Klemen Grošelj (Renew Europe); Irena Joveva (ALDE); Romana Tomc (EPP); Milan Zver (EPP). **Spain**: Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew Europe); Rosa Estarás Ferragut (EPP); Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D); Diana Riba i Giner (Greens-EFA); Ernest Urtasun (Greens/EFA). **Sweden**: Jytte Guteland (S&D); Peter Lundgren (ECR).
EU DEVELOPMENTS

1 April: European Commission publishes Horizon Europe strategic plan 2021-2024

The European Commission has published a four-year strategic plan for the Horizon Europe research programme, setting out four strategic orientations around which future EU-funded research will be based. These four orientations are:

- Promoting an open strategic autonomy by leading the development of key digital, enabling and emerging technologies, sectors and value chains.
- Restoring Europe’s ecosystems and biodiversity, and managing sustainably natural resources.
- Making Europe the first digitally enabled circular, climate-neutral and sustainable economy.
- Creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society.

The strategic plan also identifies the European co-funded and co-programmed partnerships, as well as the EU missions which will be supported though Horizon Europe. These will complement the ten Institutionalised European Partnerships proposed by the Commission in February, which includes the Innovative Health Initiative, the successor to the Innovative Medicines Initiative.

The priorities set out in Horizon Europe’s strategic plan will be implemented through the Horizon Europe work programme, which will outline funding opportunities for research and innovation activities through thematic calls for proposals. The first calls for proposals will be launched in the spring of 2021 and will be presented at the European Research and Innovation Days on 23-24 June. You can read the four-year strategic plan here:


1 April: European Commission’s Health and Digital Executive Agency becomes operational

On 1 April, the European Union announced that the Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) has formally commenced its work, taking over the function of others agencies, including the now-abolished Consumer, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA). The new body manages European programmes and initiatives on behalf of the European Commission, working across Directorate-Generals including CNECT, DEFIS, GROW and RTD, with SANTE as the lead DG. HaDEA will contribute to the implementation of a number of programmes, including:

- EU4Health programme: EUR 5.1 billion
- Horizon Europe - Pillar II, Cluster 1 - Health: EUR 4.8 billion
- Digital Europe Programme: EUR 0.8 billion
- Connecting Europe Facility - Digital: EUR 1.7 billion
- Horizon Europe - Pillar II, cluster 4 - Digital, Industry and Space: EUR 5.5 billion.

It is expected that HaDEA will manage a budget of over EUR 20 billion over the 7-year period of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). You can read more about the new agency here:

https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/index_en

8 April: European Disability Forum publishes human rights report

The European Disability Forum’s (EDF) has published the fifth edition of its Human Rights Report, with the focus of this year’s edition being on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities across Europe during 2020. The report examines how the EU and European countries have largely failed to include persons with disabilities in their responses to the pandemic. In particular, it highlights how supports and services were often suspended as a result of measures to contain the spread of the disease, with policy responses often overlooking the specific needs of persons with disabilities.

The publication sets out how this often infringed upon the rights of persons with disabilities (including around accessibility, equality and non-discrimination etc). In response to these findings, the report includes a number of recommendations for the EU and national governments, across 10 areas of policy, including:

- Preparedness and response
- Disaggregated data
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Services and supports
- Human rights-based approaches.

The full report, as well as an easy-read version, are available at:

19-20 April: EMA and HMA host a joint workshop on artificial intelligence in medicines regulation

Artificial intelligence (AI) may hold the key to improving healthcare systems, contributing greater efficacy and supporting the analysis and use of Big Data for healthcare benefit. The European Medicines Agency (EMA), together with the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA), founded a Big Data Taskforce in 2017, identifying some of the challenges and opportunities posed by Big Data in medicines regulation. One of the main recommendations arising from the Taskforce was to "Strengthen the Network ability in AI", to enable healthcare systems and professionals to realise the potential of AI and Big Data in health.

On 19 and 20 April, the EMA and HMA hosted a joint workshop on AI in medicines regulation, aiming to inform public stakeholders on the use of AI in medicine, and to hear the views of experts on the AI actions in the Big Data Taskforce. On the first day of the workshop, which was opened by Emer Cooke, the Executive Director of the EMA, we heard how AI is helping to improve the lives of patients by increasing the accuracy of diagnostics, identifying individuals who are most likely to benefit from precision cancer therapeutics (and those who may experience severe side-effects), and how AI can tease out hidden patterns from healthcare records of millions of patients. Presentations on these topics were delivered by several experts in the field of AI and healthcare, including Andre Dekker of Maastricht University, Peter Rijnbeek of Erasmus UMC, and Atul Butte of UCSF in California. Next, representatives from the World Health Organisation, pharmaceutical industry and several regulatory authorities (including the EMA and FDA) presented their perspectives on the application of AI in medicines and medicines regulation, identifying some of the key regulatory challenges facing AI. A strong emphasis was placed on the integral role played by AI in rapidly-evolving health ecosystems, from the use of digital technologies (e.g. smart watches and sensors), to the use of real-world data for evidence generation, and the development of innovative clinical trial designs.

Day 2 of the workshop was primarily focused on policy. The EMA Strategy for digital transformation was presented by Jesper Kjaer of the DKMA (Danish Medicines Authority), and the Big Data Taskforce and ICMRA recommendations were presented by Gianmario Candore (EMA) and Agnes Saint-Raymond (EMA). In the final discussion section, representatives from a broad range of stakeholder groups (inspectors, researchers, consumers, patients, healthcare professionals and industry) presented their views on the Big Data Taskforce recommendations, highlighting the recommendations they felt were of highest importance. A majority felt that creating a framework for assessment and regulation of AI algorithms was of particular importance, with many also highlighting the value of obtaining multi-stakeholder input on AI developments, to ensure transparency and promote human-centric AI designs.


27 April: European Parliament approves Horizon Europe research programme

Following a plenary vote, the European Parliament has formally approved the Horizon Europe 2021-2027 research and innovation programme.

The programme was already provisionally put in place by the European Commission from 1 January 2021. MEPs gave their final approval to the agreement with the European Council on the Horizon Europe regulation on Tuesday, adding a political declaration with 677 votes to 5 and 17 abstentions. They adopted the agreement with the European Council on the Horizon Europe specific programme with 661 votes to 5 and 33 abstentions.

Horizon Europe will have an overall budget of EUR 95.5 billion, including EUR 5.4 billion from the EU’s Next Generation EU recovery plan, and an additional investment of EUR 4 billion from the EU’s multiannual financial framework (MFF). Horizon Europe comprises three pillars:

- The Excellent Science pillar will support frontier research projects defined and driven by researchers themselves through the European Research Council (ERC). It will fund fellowships and exchanges for researchers through Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, and will invest in research infrastructure.
- The Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness pillar will directly support research relating to societal challenges, including health.
- The Innovative Europe pillar aims to make Europe a frontrunner in market-creating innovation through the European Innovation Council.

More information on the Horizon Europe programme can be found at:

27 April: European Parliament approves EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

On 27 April, the European Parliament voted in favour of granting its consent to the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement setting out the framework for the future EU-UK relationship. The consent decision was adopted by 660 votes for, five against and 32 abstentions, with an accompanying resolution, setting out Parliament’s evaluation of and expectations from the deal, passed by 578 votes, with 51 against and 68 abstentions.

On 24 December 2020, EU and UK negotiators agreed the Trade and Cooperation Agreement establishing the terms for future EU-UK cooperation, which had been provisionally applied since 1 January 2021, in order to minimise disruption. However, the consent of the European Parliament had been required for the Agreement to enter into force permanently.

As well as the significant focus on trade, the Agreement includes key aspects of continued cooperation, including around data exchange and the Horizon Europe programme.

While MEPs welcomed the continued cooperation in many areas, they expressed regret that the UK had not agreed to the inclusion of aspects such as development policies and had not continued its participation in the Erasmus+ student exchange programme. The agreement will enter into force once the European Council has concluded it, before 30 April.

Further details on the Agreement can be found at:

https://bit.ly/3xKaN6s

20 March: “You have questions, we have answers” - Alzheimer Athens hosts Caregivers Day 2021 as an interactive virtual meeting

Since 2002, Alzheimer Athens has been working to support the 200,000 people with dementia and their families living in Greece, defending their rights and claiming the establishment of structures and services aimed at promoting their quality of life.

On 20 March 2021, Caregivers Day, the association organised its annual event dedicated to the caregivers of people with dementia. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased the need for help for people with dementia and their caregivers.

Due to the restriction measures, this year’s event was an Interactive Virtual Meeting for caregivers with the theme “You have questions, we have answers”. The event started with an inspiring speech by the President of Democracy Katerina Sakellaropoulou.

During the session, dementia experts Paraskevi Sakka, Nikos Skarmeas, Kostis Prouskas, Areti Efthymiou and Irini Vamvakari answered more than 100 questions, live.

Caregivers had the opportunity to talk and be informed about the issues that concern them on a daily basis. They learned about ways they can try to respond to various behaviours they might encounter in the person they are caring for, such as apathy, obsession, aggression, intense mobility, sleep disorders, etc. They were given answers regarding practical care problems and procedural issues such as benefits and legal acts, and were also informed about the free online programmes offered by Alzheimer Athens.

A total of 650 caregivers from all over Greece, Cyprus, US and Australia participated in this year’s event.

21 April: New horizons and opportunities for collaboration emerge, as Alzheimer Bulgaria meets with MEP Tsvetelina Penkova

On 21 April, members of the board and a volunteer of Alzheimer Bulgaria met MEP Tsvetelina Penkova and her political advisor Nikola Mitov. Ms Penkova briefly presented her activities in the European Parliament, mainly focusing on economics and finances. She is the first Bulgarian MEP to participate in a discussion about the challenges faced by people with dementia at a European level, by joining a workshop of Alzheimer Europe in February this year.

Alzheimer Bulgaria presented its activities: mission, main purpose, and ideas. The association is proud to share that it has an increasing volunteer team. The volunteers participate in spreading information about dementia and the challenges of the affected families, trainings, seminars, meetings, and drafting project proposals. They briefly described their main
projects and recent events: A collaboration with the 5km Run on the “Let’s Outrun Dementia Together” initiative as part of the global Dementia Friends movement; The Generation Dialogue project; Digital Grandson; eLily; 3D4Elderly; and others. MEP Tsvetelina Penkova was interested in joining the 2021 dementia runs in Sofia and Plovdiv, aimed at prevention of dementia and raising public awareness. She will also consider collaborating on the project for 3D printing for adults. The meeting was a success and Alzheimer Bulgaria said both sides learned new things and they found that they could cooperate in various projects related to priority areas such as innovation, green policy, and digitalisation.

**22 April: France Alzheimer magazine “Agissons ensemble” includes an exclusive interview with MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen about recognising dementia as a disability**

In 2018, France Alzheimer decided to launch a new tool, following the presidential and legislative elections that occurred in 2017. Indeed, these polls considerably transformed the French political landscape and France Alzheimer felt the need to re-create a lasting link with French parliamentarians, to strengthen its advocacy work.

This 12-page magazine, called “Agissons ensemble” (“let’s act together”), which they publish twice a year, has revealed itself to be the perfect tool to provide information and constantly raise awareness among the elected representatives of the Republic (including French MEPs). A lot of them have since signalled their interest in this format and reached out to the French association for further information.

Each issue is designed around a specific subject, linked to the daily life of people with dementia and their carers. It also enables France Alzheimer to promote the concrete actions of its 100 local branches and give a voice to those most affected by the disease.

Besides the centrefold, filled with interviews and analyses, one of the pages is dedicated to a debate with elected representatives around a specific question. For example, for the May 2021 issue, thanks to the help of Alzheimer Europe, the magazine will feature an exclusive interview with MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (Finland), who agreed to answer a few questions concerning the recognition of dementia as a disability.

The second 2021 issue, planned for November, will be dedicated to the next French presidential election that will occur in April 2022. France Alzheimer may take the opportunity, at that time, to create a new digital tool as well.

**23 April: Panhellenic Federation-Bridge Project: new serious games for dementia are tested and ready to be launched**

Within the Erasmus+ funded “Bridge” project, 8 serious games acting on cognitive and behavioural symptoms of dementia have been created. The games have been designed based on the concept ideas of health professionals, game-designers, young volunteers, people with dementia and their carers coming from Greece, Italy and Romania.

The 4 digital games, Find the word, Flea market, Next destination and Bird Watching, are now available for Android devices on Play store. Follow the link to download:


The 4 physical games, Blooming flowers, Specialties, Emotions and The Directors, are now available on the Bridge Project website. Follow the link to download the rulebook and the all the game materials:

https://projectbridge.eu/the-serious-game/

All the games are available for free in English, Greek, Italian and Romanian.

The serious games have been tested during a series of workshops, in October 2020, organised in the different partner countries. The workshops had different aims: testing the games; finding an enjoyable way to act on dementia symptoms; encouraging social inclusion for people with dementia by getting them actively involved in game-playing; bridging the intergenerational gap through the direct involvement of young volunteers; creating awareness of the possibilities arising from serious games and promoting cognitive stimulation and social interaction.

The testing phase involved 47 people: 23 people with dementia, 17 health professionals, 4 caregivers and 3 young volunteers. At the end of the workshops, participants were asked to fill in questionnaires in order to collect feedback on the different games, highlighting benefits and difficulties encountered. In general, participants appreciated the games and shared positive feedback about the sessions. They also made some comments on how to improve the different games.

At the moment, the Bridge consortium is working on the development of an e-platform which offers courses and training materials about the Bridge project, and gives users the chance to download useful resources and all the games for free.

The training course and the e-platform will be available soon. To learn more about the project please visit:

https://projectbridge.eu/
23 April: Turkish Alzheimer Association marks Children’s Day with a specially tailored training about dementia and a contest

In Turkey, 23 April 1920 was the day that the National Council denounced the government of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI and announced a temporary constitution, and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was founded. One year later it was announced as a national holiday and, in 1929, the founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, presented 23 April as “Children’s Day” to emphasise that they are our successors and they are the future. Children's Day in Turkey is a unique event, entrusting in the hands of the youth the protection of sovereignty and independence.

Every year, the children in Turkey celebrate National Sovereignty and Children’s Day as a national holiday. Schools participate in week-long ceremonies marked by performances in all fields in large stadiums watched by the entire nation. Among the activities on this day, children send their representatives to replace state officials and high-ranking civil servants in their offices. The President, the cabinet ministers, provincial governors, and mayors all turn over their positions to children’s representatives.

These children, in turn, sign executive orders relating to educational and environmental policies. On this day, the children also replace the parliamentarians in the Grand National Assembly and hold a special session to discuss matters concerning children’s issues.

After UNESCO proclaimed 1979 as the International Year of the Child, children from about 50 countries started coming to Turkey every year to participate in the festival. During their stay in Turkey, visiting children are housed by Turkish families and find an important opportunity to interact with Turkish children and learn about each other’s countries and cultures. The Turkish Alzheimer Association presented a specially tailored training and a contest for children on 23 April 2021, explaining to them what dementia is and how they can communicate with people with dementia. The Association has taken this first step-aware of the fact that children are not well-informed about dementia and they often do not know how to interpret and approach people living with dementia – with a plan to progress with monthly trainings, addressing children and their parents, for the next six months. In the meantime, some schools are also being contacted about delivering more structured trainings to their students, even inserting some insights into their regular curriculum.

POLICY WATCH

20 April: Lithuania takes its first steps towards a national dementia plan

Lithuania is one of few countries in the European Union (EU) without a national dementia plan, dementia-related services are concentrated around patient care, and social care and support is fragmented. To try to move things forward, a new association, Dementia Lithuania, was formed in early 2021, aiming to represent people living with dementia and their carers, locally and internationally.

Dementia Lithuania has now launched a project, “Towards Dementia Strategy: Situation Analysis and Public Awareness.” This project, which is supported by the European Economic Area (EEA) financial mechanism and will be implemented in 2021-2023, aims to advance the national dementia strategy development and dementia advocacy in Lithuania by implementing objectives outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO):

1) to undertake a situation analysis
2) to create recommendations for dementia strategy development
3) and to raise awareness around dementia in Lithuania.

Find out more:

SCIENCE WATCH

31 March: Independent Data Safety Monitoring Board recommends the continuation of Phase IIb/III trial of Anavex for AD

On 31 March, Anavex Life Sciences Corp - a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company developing therapeutics for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer’s disease (AD) - announced that the Independent Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) has greenlighted the company to continue, without changes, its Phase IIb/III clinical trial of ANAVEX2-73 in people with AD. The DSMB has completed its recent pre-planned review of the preliminary safety data of the Phase IIb/III clinical study ANAVEX 2-73-AD-
ATTENTION-AD study.
The 48-weeks ANAVEX 2-73-AD-004 clinical study is a Phase Ib/II double-blind, randomised and placebo-controlled study evaluating the safety and efficacy of ANAVEX 2-73 for the treatment of early AD. This ongoing trial has more than 90% of the 450 research participants enrolled. Primary and secondary endpoints will assess safety and both cognitive and functional efficacy.

https://bit.ly/3xILZMb

1 April: Study shows that cholinesterase inhibitors have a modest, but long-lasting effect on cognitive decline in Alzheimer's dementia

Alzheimer's dementia is associated with the loss of cholinergic neurons, specialised brain cells that produce an important messenger protein called acetylcholine. Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (ChEI) like Donepezil constitute one of the two main classes of approved drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's dementia, and work by maximising the availability of acetylcholine in the brain. Whether ChEI drugs have a substantial effect on cognition is a hotly-contested topic. In addition, few studies have addressed the question of whether ChEI are beneficial for people with Alzheimer's dementia in the long term.

In this study, recently published in the Neurology journal, a team of researchers led by Prof. Maria Eriksdottr (Karolinska Institute, Sweden) set out to investigate whether the long-term use of ChEI is associated with slower cognitive decline, decreased severity, and death in Alzheimer's dementia. Analysing data from over 17,000 participants in the Swedish Dementia Registry (SveDem) study, the researchers evaluated the cognitive and clinical outcomes of 11,652 people who had started using ChEI within 3 months of diagnosis, compared with 5,862 non-users of ChEI. Over an average of 5 years, 255 people progressed to severe dementia, and over 6,000 died.

Statistical analyses showed that people with Alzheimer's dementia who used ChEI had slightly higher cognitive test (MMSE) scores than those who didn't use ChEI, equivalent to an average increase of 0.13 points/year. Use of ChEI was associated with a 27% reduction in mortality, with Galantamine having the strongest effects on cognitive decline and death. Of the three ChEI studied (donepezil, rivastigmine and galantamine), only galantamine significantly reduced the risk of developing severe dementia.

https://n.neurology.org/content/early/2021/03/19/WNL.000000000011832

1 April: Study shows that blood biomarkers can accurately predict the presence of Alzheimer's disease pathology in the brain

When it comes to brain pathology, Alzheimer's disease (AD) is defined by loss and gain: on the one hand, the progressive loss of neurons and on the other, the accumulation of amyloid plaques and tau tangles. In the past, accurate assessment of these pathological processes required brain imaging scans (MRI and PET) and biomarker measurements, usually performed on cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) samples obtained via lumbar puncture. In a new study published in Alzheimer's and Dementia, a team of researchers led by Prof. Alejo Nevado-Holgado (University of Oxford, UK) show that blood proteins can also predict the presence of AD pathology, accurately discriminating between people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI), MCI converters, and people with AD.

In 2018, the National Institute on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association (NIA-AA) proposed the ATN biomarker framework for classifying AD. In this framework, A refers to amyloid-beta, T refers to tau, and N refers to neurodegeneration, measured by using a range of different biomarkers. Blood-based biomarkers represent a promising, minimally-invasive advance on currently-available methods to measure ATN, which use brain imaging scans and/or CSF samples.

In their study, Prof. Nevada-Holgado and colleagues analysed samples and data from the EMIF-MBD cohort, comparing blood plasma profiles of 600 people with MCI or AD, with over 370 of their unaffected peers. Using the SOMAscan technology, which can measure over 4,000 different blood proteins in a single plasma sample, the researchers identified groups of proteins that changed in correlation with traditional ATN markers. Cross-referencing these results with clinical measures including AD diagnosis, MCI conversion and memory test scores, they found specific groups of proteins that could classify EMIF-MBD participants based on their AD diagnosis or conversion. These proteins also point to potential targets for further studies aiming to understand the molecular basis of AD.

5 April: The FDA rejects the application for pimavanserin for the treatment of hallucinations and delusions associated with dementia-related psychosis

On 5 April, Acadia Pharmaceuticals Inc, announced that the company has received the decision from the US Administration Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding its supplemental new drug application for pimavanserin for the treatment of hallucinations and delusions associated with dementia-related psychosis. Pimavanserin is an antipsychotic drug, approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of Parkinson’s disease psychosis. The FDA has accepted the filing of the supplemental new drug application for pimavanserin in July 2020 for the treatment of hallucinations and delusions associated with dementia-related psychosis. This application is supported by findings from the HARMONY Phase III trial, which evaluated the safety and efficacy of pimavanserin for the treatment of hallucinations and delusions associated with Lewy Bodies, vascular dementia and frontotemporal dementia. The drug met its primary endpoint of delaying relapse of psychosis in people with dementia-related psychosis compared to placebo.

The company announced that it received a letter from FDA stating that the application cannot be approved. The FDA did not mention any safety issues, it raised concerns regarding statistically significant data in some of the subgroups of dementia and insufficient numbers of participants with certain less common dementia subtypes. Acadia Pharmaceuticals will request a meeting with the FDA to address the concerns and determine the next steps for potential approval of pimavanserin in dementia-related psychosis.

https://bit.ly/3nGUmmV

7 April: Impairment of hearing and sight can increase the risk of dementia, study finds

As we age, the likelihood of experiencing problems with our hearing and sight increases. In a new study, recently published in Neurology, a team of Korean researchers have found that losing function in both senses doubles the risk of dementia, whereas hearing or sight impairments alone do not. Studying the association between hearing and sight impairment in the community-based Korean Longitudinal Study on Cognitive Aging and Dementia (KLOSCAD), researchers obtained self-report questionnaires from over 6,500 individuals aged between 58 and 101 years. At the start of study, 2,631 participants reported dual sensory impairment (DSI; hearing and sight impairment), with only 932 participants reporting no problems with their hearing or eyesight. Double the number of participants with DSI (8%) had a dementia diagnosis compared to those with single sensory impairment (SSI) or no sensory impairment. During the 6-year follow-up period, a further 245 participants received a diagnosis of dementia, 146 of whom had problems with both sight and hearing. The incidence of dementia was twice as high in the group of participants with DSI compared to those with no sensory impairment, and these individuals experienced a faster rate of cognitive decline over the 6-year study period.

https://n.neurology.org/content/early/2021/04/07/WNL.0000000000011845

12 April: CPAD consortium announces the expansion of its Alzheimer’s disease data repository

The mission of the Critical Path for Alzheimer’s Disease (CPAD) consortium is to accelerate the Alzheimer’s disease (AD) drug development process, for the benefit of people living with AD. As a US-based, public-private partnership, CPAD works with industry, regulators, researchers and patient organisations on various fronts, one of which involves the creation of integrated databases for cohort and clinical trial data. On 12 April, CPAD announced the expansion of its AD patient-level data repository, which now incorporates over 21,000 patient-level records from 42 cohort studies and clinical trials. These data, which have been contributed by pharmaceutical industry partners and are safely stored in the CPAD repository, can now be accessed by scientific researchers. De-identified datasets include patient-level information on biomarkers, genotype, cognitive and functional assessments and demographics, representing a valuable resource for the generation of new drug development tools and disease progression models. Klaus Romero, Chief Scientific Officer of the Critical Path Institute, highlighted the importance of data sharing for AD research, stating “CPAD provides the AD field with a unique opportunity to transform patient-level data into actionable solutions, which can in turn transform the drug development process for AD.”

13 April: Otsuka and Lundbeck continue Phase III trial with brexpiprazole in people with dementia, following an independent interim analysis

On 13 April, Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. and H. Lundbeck A/S announced the decision to continue the recruitment of research participants in the Phase III clinical trial evaluating brexpiprazole for the treatment of agitation in people with dementia of the Alzheimer’s type. This decision is based on the results of an independent interim analysis.

This 12-week Phase III study is a multicentre, randomised, double-blind and placebo-controlled study evaluating the efficacy, safety, and tolerability of two doses of brexpiprazole compared with placebo. Sponsors are planning to recruit 330 participants aged between 55 and 90 years, with agitation associated with dementia of the Alzheimer’s type. Completion of the trial is expected in the first half of 2022. As agreed with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), an interim analysis conducted was planned when 255 participants had completed the trial.

13 April: Researchers identify changes in tau proteins that may link traumatic brain injury to AD in later life

After age and genetic risk factors, traumatic brain injury is the third leading cause of Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Resulting from blows to the head, traumatic brain injury (TBI) can have long-lasting effects on the structure and function of the brain. On 13 April, a team of researchers led by Prof. Andrew Pieper published a paper in the Cell journal, describing how TBI can induce changes in tau proteins that damage brain cells, potentially leading to the development of AD and other neurodegenerative diseases in later life.

Tangled tau proteins are known as a pathological hallmark of AD, damaging nerve cells in the brain and contributing to cognitive decline. Using animal models of TBI, Prof. Pieper and colleagues observed the rapid accumulation of ac-Tau, a specialised form of the protein, after brain injury. Ac-Tau could be measured in the blood of TBI animals, and was associated with neurodegeneration and cognitive impairment, suggesting that it could be a helpful biomarker in this context. Treatment of animals with drugs such as salsalate (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug/NSAID) was able to prevent ac-Tau accumulation after TBI.

To check whether ac-tau could also be relevant for TBI and AD in humans, the researchers then tested a small number of postmortem brain samples from donors with AD who had also experienced TBI. Similar to what they observed in animal models, they saw an increased presence of ac-Tau in brain samples from donors with AD and a history of TBI. Using a large database of US health records, including data from over 7 million insured individuals, the researchers assessed whether the use of salsalate or diflunisal (two NSAIDs with a different mode of action to aspirin) was associated with fewer TBI and/or AD diagnoses. These data analyses revealed that people taking salsalate were 30% less likely to have a clinical diagnosis of TBI, compared to people taking aspirin. They also observed a reduced incidence of AD in people taking salsalate or diflunisal compared to those prescribed aspirin, even when correcting for known AD risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.


20 April: Eisai and Biogen report results of Phase IIb study of lecanemab in early AD

On 20 April, Biogen and Eisai announced the recent publication describing the results of the Study 201, a Phase IIb proof-of-concept study designed to evaluate the safety and efficacy of the anti-amyloid protofibril antibody lecanemab (BAN2401) in people with early Alzheimer’s disease (AD). These findings were published in the journal Alzheimer’s Research & Therapy.

The Study 201 was an 18-month multi-centre, double-blind, placebo-controlled and parallel-group Phase IIb study of lecanemab in people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) due to AD or mild AD dementia. Sponsored by Eisai, the study enrolled 854 participants from US, Europe and Asia, aged between 50 and 90, 609 of whom were assigned to receive lecanemab.

Results showed that the study did not meet the 12-month primary endpoint, which was a change from baseline in the Alzheimer’s Disease Composite Score (ADCOMS) at 12 months. ADCOMS consists of several items including the mini mental state examination (MMSE), the clinical dementia rating- sum of boxes (CDR-SB) and the AD assessment scale-cognitive subscale (ADAS-Cog). Results from prespecified key secondary endpoint analyses demonstrated that lecanemab reduced brain amyloid and showed a consistent reduction of clinical decline across several clinical and biomarker endpoints at 18 months. In addition, lecanemab was generally well-tolerated with the key adverse event being amyloid-related imaging abnormalities-edema/effusion (ARIA-E) with an incidence rate of less than 10% at the highest doses for the overall population.
Currently, lecanemab is being studied in a Phase III clinical study in symptomatic early AD, named Clarity AD. This study completed enrolment in March with 1,795 symptomatic participants who received either lecanemab or placebo during 18 months. The 18-month results are expected to be available in September 2022.


20 April: Researchers find that sleeping less in middle age may be associated with an increased risk of late-onset dementia

People who sleep less than 6 hours a night in their 50’s and 60’s may be at increased risk of developing dementia in old age, according to a new study published in Nature Communications.

Recent studies indicate that the development of dementia occurs over many years and decades, identifying lifestyle habits and treatable conditions early in the lifespan that might predispose people to dementia. In their Nature Communications article, Séverine Sabia and colleagues examined whether sleep duration at age 50, 60 or 70 could be connected with the development of dementia in older age. Using data from the Whitehall Cohort study, which started recruiting participants in the 1980’s, the researchers identified 7959 participants with almost 30 years of follow-up. Of these, 521 developed dementia during the follow-up period, with an average age of diagnosis of 77 years.

Dividing participants into groups according to their sleep duration (low <6h, normal = 7h, high >8h), the researchers found that individuals who slept less than 6h at age 50 or 60 had approximately 30% higher risk of developing dementia in later life, compared to people who slept 7h or more. This association persisted even when correcting for known dementia risk factors such as cardiovascular disease, marriage status and BMI.

https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-021-22354-2

21 April: TauRx completes randomisation of its Lucidity Phase III trial for AD

On 11 April, the company TauRx Therapeutics Ltd announced the completion of patient randomisation for its Lucidity Phase III trial for the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease (AD). The Lucidity trial is a randomised, double-blind and placebo-controlled study evaluating the safety and efficacy of hydromethylthionine in people with AD encompassing mild cognitive impairment due to AD. Hydromethylthionine (which TauRx refer to under the chemical abbreviation, LMTM) acts by blocking abnormal accumulation of tau protein in the brain. Lucidity is the only late-stage study targeting the tau pathology of AD.

The recruitment has exceeded the company’s initial target by around 20% and is now complete across 76 trial sites in US, Canada and Europe. All study participants have now been screened and randomised to receive either oral capsules of hydromethylthionine (8 or 16 mg/day) or placebo twice daily for 52 weeks. The primary outcomes of the study are progression of cognitive decline and functional impairment over 12 months measured by standard clinical scales. In addition, an open-label, delayed-start phase is included to demonstrate a disease-modifying effect of the experimental drug, in which all participants will receive the drug. Top line results of the trial are expected in Q2 2022.

“Completing randomisation for the Lucidity trial is an important milestone in our quest to confirm the efficacy of LMTM, and we recognise the incredible work of the teams involved in reaching this point in unprecedented circumstances. Exceeding our initial target for patient numbers by around 20 percent is testament to the interest in testing tau-based alternatives to drugs targeting amyloid which have been largely unsuccessful so far.”, said Professor Claude Wischik, CEO of TauRx.


21 April: AgeneBio completes enrolment of its HOPE4MCI Phase IIb trial with people with MCI due to AD

On 21 April, the biopharmaceutical company AgeneBio, which develops innovative therapeutics to preserve and restore brain function, announced that it has completed enrolment in its Phase IIb clinical trial evaluating AGB101 to treat amnestic mild
cognitive impairment (MCI) due to Alzheimer’s disease (AD). AGB101 has been developed to target the reduction of hippocampal overactivity to slow progression and delay the onset of Alzheimer’s dementia.

The Phase Ib trial, named “HOPE4MCI”, is a 78-week study, randomised, double-blind and placebo-controlled study evaluating the efficacy of AGB101 on slowing cognitive and functional impairment as measured by changes in the Clinical Dementia Rating-Sum of Boxes (CDR-SB) score as compared with placebo in people with MCI due to AD. The study has enrolled 164 research participants across 23 sites in the United States and Canada. They will receive either AGB101 (220 mg) or placebo one daily for 78 weeks. Secondary objectives are to assess the effect of AGB101 compared with placebo on clinical progression as measured by Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) and Functional Activities Questionnaire (FAQ). Topline results are expected in November 2022.

DEMENTIA IN SOCIETY

10 March: Liverpool Dementia & Ageing Research Forum explores what really matters to people with dementia

On 10 of March, the Liverpool Dementia & Ageing Research Forum, set up and run by Dr Clarissa Giebel from the University of Liverpool and the NIHR ARC NWC, welcomed over 200 attendees to hear about and discuss what really matters to people with dementia. Prof. Siobhan Reilly (University of Bradford) and Dr Andrew Harding (Lancaster University) shared some of their findings on their research into developing a Core outcome set of things which really matter to people with dementia, as opposed to an abundance of existing tools which do not seem to capture exactly what it is that people with dementia want and need. This was followed by a fabulous discussion with attendees (carers, clinicians, academics, service providers, members of the public), and if you were unlucky enough to miss the talk and information about their Core outcome set, have a look at the YouTube recording here:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/liverpool-dementia-ageing-research-forum-may-2021-tickets-144630727399

21 April: Dance drama short film is exploring memory loss in Alzheimer’s dementia

A group of film students at the University of the Arts London is involved in a film project aiming to raise awareness of Alzheimer’s dementia and how it affects people. They are making a dance drama short film called “The Paths Home”, which tells the story of Milo, a six-year old boy who finds himself facing an unknown challenge when his grandmother starts to lose her memory.
The film delves into the complexities of memory loss in Alzheimer’s dementia, through Milo’s eyes, as he begins to notice strange similarities between his grandmother and his pet goldfish, and he sets to find out why his grandmother’s behaviour is changing.

The idea for the film is based on the writer and director Rita Gratacòs’ personal experience with her grandmother, and there are others among the film crew who have joined the production for similar reasons, due to experiences with family members affected by dementia.

The film makers hope to spread awareness through their unique storytelling approach, but they need support via their crowdfunding campaign, to raise the necessary funds to produce this film.

You can find out more and support them, here:
https://igg.me/at/the-paths-home

23 April: Alzheimer Europe Board member Karin Westerlund gives keynote speech at Swedish Family Care Competence Centre webinar

On 22 February 2021, Karin Westerlund, a Board member of Alzheimer Europe, gave a speech at the Swedish Family Care Competence Centre, SFCCC, in Stockholm, Sweden. She discussed the socioeconomic effects of caring for people with cognitive decline during these special times (post-Brexit; COVID-19 pandemic). There were also questions and a panel-discussion about gender-issues with the other guest-speakers that attended.

The SFCCC has, since last year, put more focus on older people, neurodegenerative diseases and quality-of-life issues of carers in Sweden. Their webinars have become popular and well-attended, especially during the pandemic restrictions.

The webinars are free for everyone to watch and download and you can find them all here, including the one that Karin Westerlund spoke at, in her capacity as a Board member of Alzheimer Europe: https://bit.ly/3aY3MoX

24 April: Global Coalition on Aging and World Summit on Information Society co-organise virtual hackathon on enhancing healthy ageing using ICTs

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021 once again invited the Global Coalition on Aging (GCOA) to drive awareness and foster innovative thinking on aging and technology. This year, GCOA is leading the ICT (information and communications technology)’s and Older Persons track, a series of sessions that GCOA started last year and one where, this year, they organised and curated a series of five panels, as well as the first-ever virtual Hackathon and the first Healthy Ageing Innovation Prize. The panels brought together government, NGOs and private sector leaders to discuss their shared interests in developing and expanding usage of ICTs for older adults to achieve a healthier and more active aging across the life course. Their lively discussions were held during the week of 12-16 April and can be viewed on the WSIS website.

The Ageing Better with ICTs Hackathon is poised to be a great success with over 1,100 registrants, and 800 teams, composed of a broad range of ages and genders from across the globe. The Hackers were given four problem areas within which to find solutions: Alzheimer’s Disease and Cognitive Decline; Frailty; Transportation and Mobility and; Financial Tools for Longevity. The Hackathon engaged support from 16 mentors, ranging from business and academia to international organisations, that participated in 3 separate mentoring sessions to share real-life experiences to better inform the hackers in their projects. These mentor sessions were held on 30 March, 6 and 7 April and the recordings of these sessions are also available on the WSIS website.

This year, GCOA also introduced the first Healthy Ageing Innovation Prize to celebrate existing innovation and developments that target the needs of people 60+ to achieve and sustain an active and engaged life. There are more than 80 ICT solution submissions with projects that range from the needs of the visually-impaired in mobility, home care assessment and training, supporting independence and those with cognitive decline, and ways to heighten enjoyment for older persons and encourage multi-generational engagement.

The twelve finalists were announced on 29 April in a session where they presented to the judges: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2021/Agenda/Session/423

The WSIS Forum is the world’s largest annual gathering of the ICT for development community, including ICT ministers, NGOs, twenty-four UN bodies, the academy, and business. The WSIS Forum is co-organised by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD.

25 April: Anthony Hopkins wins best actor Oscar for his role as a man with dementia in “The Father”

Anthony Hopkins has won the best actor Oscar at the 93rd Academy Awards in Los Angeles, on 25 April 2021. Hopkins, 83, won for his performance in “The Father”, directed by French novelist and playwright Florian Zeller, who also wrote the acclaimed stage play “Le Père”, on which the film is based. This was Mr Hopkins’ second Oscar for best actor, with the first in 1994 for his role as Hannibal Lecter, in “The Silence of the Lambs”. The victory makes Hopkins the oldest ever Oscar
Family caregivers who provide care for people with dementia, often experience a physical and mental impact also known as “caregiver burden”. A new digital service tool - the "dementia caregiver traffic light" - aims to make them aware of their level of personal burden so that they can take countermeasures. The “dementia caregiver traffic light” is an online-self-test that was developed by the dementia research project “Digital Dementia Register Bavaria”, in short digiDEM Bayern: https://digidem-bayern.de/

Key points:
- The dementia caregiver traffic light is a low-threshold digital service that offers the possibility to address family caregivers early.
- As a digital tool, it is especially useful now, during the Corona pandemic, which has made the situation for family caregivers more difficult.
- It is possible to add additional languages and to integrate the tool into other websites, for free.
- It is free of charge.
- It is based on scientific studies.

Based on ten questions, covering topics such as physical exhaustion, and contentment with life, family caregivers can find out what their individual situation is. The result - green, yellow or red – comes with a recommendation for the next steps, thus providing an impetus to improve their life situation. The online self-test can be performed anonymously and free of charge. It is currently offered in four languages: German, English, Turkish and Russian:

https://digidem-bayern.de/angehoerigenampel/

Integrate the service into your own website!
You can integrate the new digital service tool into your own website, free of charge and the service can be extended for further languages without programming knowledge. All you need is a Word Press website. digiDEM Bayern will then provide you with the plug-in and installation instructions.

If you are interested, please contact: trafficlight@digidem-bayern.de

Efficacy proven in extensive studies
The dementia caregiver traffic light is based upon the short form of the "Burden Scale for Family Caregivers BSFC-s". This survey instrument was developed by scientists at the Centre of Health Services Research in Medicine at the University of
Hospital of the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg. It is available in over 20 languages and has been used worldwide for six years. In an extensive scientific study with 351 family caregivers, it was proven that the BSFC-s reliably measures the extent of the stress experienced by family caregivers. In another study with 386 family caregivers, the validity of the traffic light system was proven. The results showed the risk of health impairment a family caregiver faces based upon a given stress score on the BSFC-s. On this basis, a classification was made which formed the template for the traffic light system.

https://bmcgeriatr.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2318-14-23
https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-018-3047-4

Digital support services for everyday life

The dementia caregiver traffic light is one of several online services provided by digiDEM Bayern. The aim is to support people with dementia, family caregivers, and volunteers by providing digital solutions suitable for everyday use. In addition, digiDEM Bayern includes research of people with dementia and family caregivers over a period of three years. The aim is to gain insights into the course of the disease and the situation of the family caregivers.

The dementia research project digiDEM Bayern is conducted by the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, the University Hospital Erlangen, and the Innovation Cluster Medical Valley EMN. It is funded by the Bavarian State Ministry of Health and Care:

https://digidem-bayern.de/angehoerigenampel/

21 April: 8-year-old Dementia Friend Heather Bryson’s new chair exercise video aims to help people with dementia keep fit at home

8-year-old Heather Bryson has released a 9-minute-long chair exercise video, specifically developed by physiotherapists, for people living with dementia.

Heather is no stranger to helping people with dementia, having already donated proceeds to Alzheimer Scotland, from her lockdown craft project upcycling old tea sets to create birdfeeders and selling them. Heather’s mother Deborah works for Alzheimer Scotland and Heather gained her Dementia Friends badge through one of their sessions. She is also working with Alzheimer Scotland to develop child-friendly Dementia Friends training sessions.

The new chair exercise video is available on her YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJGze3qXh9k&t

There is also more information and news of her adventures on her Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/Lock-Down-Exercise-By-H-106998824802145

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

12 April: BarcelonaBeta Brain Research Center seeks Clinical Group Leader for Alzheimer’s Prevention Programme

The BarcelonaBeta Brain Research Center (BBRC) is a research centre dedicated to the prevention of Alzheimer’s disease and the study of cognitive functions affected in healthy and pathological ageing. The BBRC is looking for a Clinical Group Leader for its Alzheimer’s Prevention Programme. They are recruiting at all seniority levels and will consider full- and part-time applications.

Deadline for submission: 21 May 2021.

Full job description: https://bit.ly/3tCFUj4

Apply here:

https://www.barcelonabeta.org/en/bbrc-research-center/job-offers

22 April: Two PhD researcher fellowships available at University of Oslo for the AI-Mind project

Applications are invited for two PhD researcher positions at the Department of Neurology, Oslo University Hospital (OUH), within the EU Horizon 2020 AI-Mind Project. Al-Mind is a five-year Research and Innovation Action (RIA) project, with a consortium of fifteen project partners from eight European countries. It is an interdisciplinary, international multicentre project that aims at developing a cloud-based diagnostic support platform for early dementia risk estimation in people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI). The platform will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) based methods to integrate electroencephalographic (EEG) data with cognitive test scores and genetic information.
The positions will be located at the coordinating group of the AI-Mind Project at Oslo University Hospital, Ullevål. The candidates will work in close collaboration with both academic and commercial European partners from the AI-Mind consortium, in particular with the Norwegian (OsloMet) and Finish (Aalto University) AI partners and the academic spin-off company BrainSymph AS.

The deadline for applications is 10 May 2021.

For more information and to apply, see: https://2411.webcruiter.no/Main2/Recruit/Public/4379116142?language=nb&link_source_id=0

Contact Alzheimer Europe:
Alzheimer Europe: 14, rue Dicks (L-1417), Luxembourg; info@alzheimer-europe.org; www.alzheimer-europe.org

Alzheimer Europe Board:
**Chairperson:** Iva Holmerová (Czech Republic); **Vice-Chairperson:** Charles Scerri (Malta); **Honorary Secretary:** James Pearson (UK, Scotland); **Honorary Treasurer:** Marco Blom (Netherlands). **Members:** Stefanie Becker (Switzerland), René Friederici (Luxembourg), Sabine Jansen (Germany), Pat McLoughlin (Ireland), Sirpa Pietikäinen (Finland), Chris Roberts, Chairperson of the European Working Group of People with Dementia (United Kingdom), Karin Westerlund (Sweden), Maria do Rósario Zincke dos Reis (Portugal).

Alzheimer Europe Staff:
**Executive Director:** Jean Georges; **Communications Officer:** Kate Boor Ellis; **Conference and Event Coordinator:** Gwladys Guillory; **Director for Projects:** Dianne Gove; **Project Communications Officer:** Christophe Bintener; **Project Officers:** Cindy Birck, Angela Bradshaw, Ana Diaz; **Policy Officer:** Owen Miller; **Finance Officer:** Stefanie Peulen; **Administrative Assistant:** Grazia Tomasini.
# AE CALENDAR 2021

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>AE representative</th>
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<td>4 May</td>
<td>Familiarisation Session of ICCA Benefits and Tools</td>
<td>Gwladys</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 May</td>
<td>MIRIADE project meeting with EWGPWD</td>
<td>Ana and Dianne</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 May</td>
<td>MIRIADE Supervisory Board meeting</td>
<td>Jean</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 May</td>
<td>WHO GDO Knowledge Exchange platform</td>
<td>Jean and Owen</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>NEURONET Communication Experts’ meeting</td>
<td>Chris, Cindy, Ange</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>EWGPWD Feedback meeting</td>
<td>Dianne, Ana, Ange</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 May</td>
<td>European Commission online event “Mental health and the pandemic: living, caring, acting!”</td>
<td>Jean, Ana, Cindy</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 May</td>
<td>NEURONET Taskforce meeting</td>
<td>Ange</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 May</td>
<td>EFPIA Patient Think Tank</td>
<td>Owen</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 May</td>
<td>France Alzheimer colloque 100 % digitale: &quot;Si ce n’est pas Alzheimer, c’est quoi ? L’errance diagnostique face aux maladies apparentées&quot;</td>
<td>Cindy, Dianne and Kate</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 May</td>
<td>PRIME meeting on dissemination to patient organisations</td>
<td>Ange</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 May</td>
<td>Biogen meeting</td>
<td>Ana</td>
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<td>17 May</td>
<td>PRIME Webinar</td>
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<td>18 May</td>
<td>EuropaBio Patient BioForum</td>
<td>Owen</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 May</td>
<td>AE Alzheimer’s Association Academy: Sports and dementia</td>
<td>AE staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 May</td>
<td>Alzheimer Scotland’s international committee</td>
<td>Owen</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-27 May</td>
<td>Dementia Forum X</td>
<td>Jean</td>
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# CONFERENCES 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Format/ Place</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26-30 July</td>
<td>Alzheimer’s Association International Conference (AAIC), <a href="https://www.alz.org/aaic/overview.asp">https://www.alz.org/aaic/overview.asp</a></td>
<td>Amsterdam, Netherlands &amp; Virtual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-26 September</td>
<td>15th World Congress on Controversies in Neurology (CONy), <a href="https://cony.comtecmed.com/">https://cony.comtecmed.com/</a></td>
<td>Dubai, United Arab Emirates</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-29 October</td>
<td>Digital transformation of healthcare: the added value of patient partnerships (EPF), <a href="https://epfcongress.eu/">https://epfcongress.eu/</a></td>
<td>Virtual</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Nov-1 Dec</td>
<td>31st Alzheimer Europe Conference, <a href="https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/Conferences/2021-Online">https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/Conferences/2021-Online</a></td>
<td>Virtual</td>
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**Note:** The dates and details are placeholders and should be replaced with actual information. The format/ place column indicates whether the event is an online event or held in a specific location.
31st Alzheimer Europe Conference
Resilience in dementia:
Moving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic
Virtual Conference
29 November - 1 December 2021
www.alzheimer-europe.org/conferences  #31AEC