GENERAL

Study uncovers 11 Key Predictors of Dementia for early diagnosis.

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Millions of Americans face risk of developing dementia, but a new report highlights how early detection, and proactive steps could help in delaying its onset and reducing its impact. The study reveals that factors like cognitive ability, lifestyle habits, and physical health can indicate dementia risk up to 20 years before symptoms appear. Key predictors include conditions like diabetes, a lack of regular exercise, and limited or no work history.

However, barriers such as high costs and limited access prevent many people from undergoing routine cognitive tests, addressing these challenges could help in connecting more individuals for early treatments and resources can be more effective than before.?

According to research from the nonprofit RAND Corporation, cognitive ability, physical health, and functional limitations are among the strongest indicators of dementia risk. Unfortunately, only about 16% of Americans over 65 receive cognitive assessments during routine doctor visits, even though such testing could play a crucial role.

With 58 million older adults in the U.S. at risk, making cognitive tests free, accessible, and backed by better treatment options could significantly improve early detection and care. Early intervention is vital, as current treatments for Alzheimer's and related dementias work best in their initial stages.

The study further identified that several factors strongly predict the likelihood of developing dementia.

1. Poor physical health.
2. A history of Stroke.
3. Specific genetic traits linked to a higher risk of cognitive decline and dementia.
4. Lacking private health insurance by the age of 60 years.
5. Limited or no work experience throughout life.
6. Having diabetes or a BMI of 35 or higher at age 60.
7. Abstaining from alcohol and drinking excessively.
8. A lifestyle with no exercise.
9. Weak performance on physical tests like grip strength, walking speed, and balance.
10. Low levels of conscientiousness in personality traits.
11. Minimal involvement in hobbies or activities that require learning or mental stimulation.

These findings underscore the importance of physical health, lifestyle choices, and staying mentally and socially active in reducing the risk of dementia.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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