

To ensure delivery, add info@preventad.com to your address book.

PREVENTION HIGHLIGHT

8 Facts to Help Evaluate the Post-Holiday Syndrome: *Dementia or Pseudo-Dementia*

The holiday season frequently reunites family members and often provides an opportunity for them to notice changes in one another. The most common observation is that an aging family member appears depressed or more forgetful. We offer the following facts about memory loss, dementia and depression to help clarify what might be causing any noticeable changes:

1. Memory Loss and Dementia can be caused by many conditions including depression.
2. Short-term memory loss, including the inability to store newly learned information, is the first symptom of Alzheimer's disease.
3. A diagnosis of major depressive disorders requires that patients must experience persistence in their depression-related symptoms for at least a few weeks.
4. Depression can be a consequence or cause of dementia; the presence of depression does not exclude a coexisting memory disorder.
5. Memory loss due to Alzheimer's disease is characterized by impaired ability to store newly learned information. Therefore providing cues or hints will not help Alzheimer's patients recall recently learned information.
6. Individuals with memory loss due to Depression are able to at least partially store newly learned information, but have impaired ability to retrieve it after a few minutes delay. However, when provided cues, they are generally able to recall recently learned information.
7. Alzheimer's patients are often unaware of at least some of their deficits and will frequently say they do not have a problem or will overestimate their abilities.
8. Persons with Depression are commonly very aware of their deficits and will often underestimate their abilities.

RESEARCH UPDATES

Vegetable Consumption May Slow Cognitive Decline in Old Age

A study published in the October issue of *Neurology*, found that eating two to three servings of vegetables every day might help keep the mind sharp in old age. The study was conducted by Martha Clare Morris of the Rush University Medical Center and her colleagues. They studied 3,718 Chicago residents ages 65 and older. During a six-year period, each

participant filled out a diet questionnaire and took at least two memory tests. Cognition and test scores usually worsen slightly as an individual ages. However, seniors who said they ate 2.8 servings of vegetables a day during the study showed slower cognitive changes by 40% when compared to those who ate less than one serving of vegetables per day. A serving in the study was defined as a half-cup. Additionally, researchers found that eating vegetables helped slow the cognitive decline more in the older individuals.

Omega-3 Supplements May Delay Cognitive Decline in Mild Alzheimer's Disease

A study, published in the October 2006 issue of the Archives of Neurology suggests that Omega-3 supplements may slow cognitive decline in patients with very mild Alzheimer's disease. The study was led by Yvonne Freund-Levi, MD, from the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. The trial of 174 AD patients found Omega-3 fatty acids did not affect the rate of cognitive decline at 6-months follow-up. However, a small subgroup of 32 patients with mild Alzheimer's disease experienced a significant reduction in their rate of cognitive decline when compared with the placebo group.

Physical Fitness in Healthy Aging Individuals May Lead to Better Cognitive Function

A recent study conducted by Ian J. Deary, PhD, at the University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Scotland, highlights the importance of physical fitness in aging individuals. The study, published in the October issue of Neurology, found that 79-year old individuals (N=460) who were more physically fit had greater cognitive ability after adjusting for their childhood IQ differences. Researchers have retested surviving study participants from the Scottish Mental Survey of 1932 (participants were age 11) on the same general cognitive test at age 79. The study results indicated that, for people starting with the same IQ at age 11, the fitter person at age 79 years will, on average, have better cognitive function.

Mediterranean Diet May Reduce Alzheimer's Disease Risk

Researchers at Columbia University in New York, led by Nikolaos Scarmeas, MD, found that adherence to the Mediterranean diet reduced the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. The Mediterranean diet reduced the individuals Alzheimer's disease risk by 68% compared with those who did not adhere to this diet. The diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, legumes, cereals, and fish and low in meat and dairy products.