

Alzheimer's Disease Is a Public Health Issue

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Presentation Overview

- I. Why is Alzheimer's a public health issue
- II. How can public health help
 - I. Surveillance
 - II. Promote primary prevention
 - III. Assure early detection and diagnosis
- III. Questions/Discussion

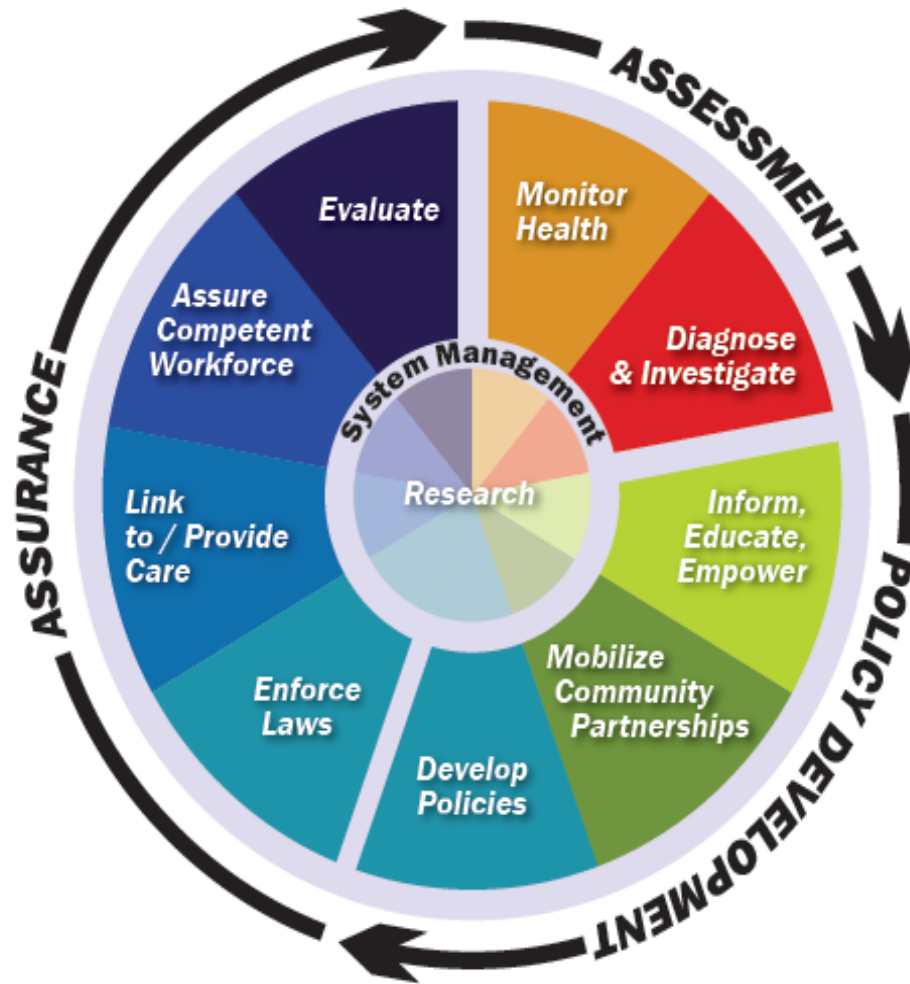


Alzheimer's Disease

- Historically, Alzheimer's Disease has been seen as an “aging” issue
- Why Alzheimer's is a public health issue?
 - The burden is large and the impact is major
 - Over 5 million American's have Alzheimer's (projected to grow to as many as 16 million by 2050)
 - Costs US over \$200 billion annually (projected to grow to \$20 trillion by 2050)
 - Over 15 million unpaid caregivers provide over 17 billion hours of unpaid care annually
 - 70% of the care costs for those with Alzheimer's is paid for by MD/MC
- People are beginning to recognize Alzheimer's as a public health issue
 - Alzheimer's Disease and dementia are now included in the Healthy People 2020
 - 17 states are now including the Cognitive Decline Module in their BRFSS surveys
 - 2011 National Alzheimer's Project Act



Public Health



- Works on a population level to achieve lasting change in preventing disease and promoting health
- Public health's approach to health issues focuses on assessment, policy development and assurance and 10 corresponding essential health services



How Can Public Health Help

Even without a way to prevent, cure or slow the progression of Alzheimer's Disease public health can improve the quality of life for those with the disease and reduce costs associated with it

- Surveillance
- Promoting Primary Prevention
- Promoting and assuring early detection and diagnosis



Surveillance

- Collect and report data
- Provides the ability to track and monitor trends, identify resource and service needs, inform interventions, and guide research efforts
 - Use data to identify opportunities to reduce potential difficulties and burden
 - Enable policymakers to make informed decisions
- Use the BRFFS to collect data, North Carolina needs to add the Cognitive Decline Module and the Caregiver Module
 - Cognitive Module
 - Caregiver Module – asks about the caregiver’s health problems, greatest care needs and impact of caregiving

Surveillance (continued)

Current demographic data indicates:

- Older African Americans are about 2 times more likely than older whites for have Alzheimer's and other dementias
- Older Hispanics are about 1 – 1.5 times more likely than older whites to have these condition

Medicare data illustrates other health disparities:

- African Americans are less likely than whites to be diagnosed and when they are diagnosed it is in the later stages of the disease resulting from higher use of health care services and substantially higher costs
- Average per person MC payments are 45% higher for African Americans and 37 % higher for Hispanics compared with whites who have dementia diagnosis



Promoting Primary Prevention

- Prevention strategies are key to reducing prevalence of major diseases and disorders
- While there is no known way to prevent Alzheimer's Disease, emerging evidence shows regular physical activity and attention to health may benefit Cognitive Health
- This provides for integration of cognitive health messages into other campaigns on health living practices chronic conditions
 - Other public health initiatives where there may be a heart/brain connection: smoking, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure
 - Public health promotes interventions to address the modifiable heart disease risk factors
- Allows those affected by the disease to plan for the future and access community based services (both of which can help reduce costs)



Promoting Early Detection and Diagnosis

- As many as half of those with Alzheimer's or dementia have not been diagnosis
- Public Health can help increase the diagnosis through education and promotion:
 - Educate providers and public on warning signs of dementia
 - Include 10 Warning Signs on agency websites
 - Educate providers on value of discussing memory issues with adult patients during primary care visits, possibly include assessing cognition algorithm during the MC Annual Wellness visit
- This ensures ability to provide better care and outcomes for patients
- Provides best opportunities for early intervention and maintenance of independent living
- Allows for better management of multiple chronic

