Number of Older Adults with Alzheimer's and Related Dementias to Double by 2060

As the U.S. population grows, minority groups will see the highest rise in dementias.

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As the population of Americans 65 years and older is expected to grow substantially in the future, a new study published in Alzheimer's and Dementia predicts that Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) will double by 2060, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

ADRD are illnesses that affect the brain and cause individuals to lose the ability to think, remember and reason, which can negatively affect the quality of their daily lives and activities.

For the study, researchers at the CDC used population projections from the Census Bureau and percentages of the Medicare Fee-for-Service beneficiaries with ADRD 65 years and older to determine the sum of people with these illnesses in 2014 and 2060.

Scientists estimated that the burden of ADRD in 2014 was 5 million Americans 65 and older. By 2060, researchers expect 13.9 million Americans in this age group to develop ADRD. Researchers note that the increase is the result of fewer people dying of chronic diseases and surviving into older age when the risk for Alzheimer's increases.

Other key highlights of the inquiry showed that the highest prevalence of Alzheimer's in older adults was among African Americans (13.8 percent). This group was followed by Hispanics (12.2 percent), non-Hispanic whites (10.3 percent), American Indian and Alaska Natives (9.1 percent) and Asian and Pacific Islanders (8.4 percent).

Overall, researchers noted that ADRD would strike almost 3.2 million Hispanics and 2.2 million African Americans by 2060, with non-Hispanic white people experiencing the largest total number of cases during the projection period.

"It's important for people who think their daily lives are impacted by memory loss to discuss these concerns with a health care provider," said Kevin Matthews, PhD, a health geographer with the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotion and the study's lead author. "An

early assessment and diagnosis is key to planning for their health care needs, including long-term services and supports, as the disease progresses."

The findings stressed that being armed with this advance notice would help caregivers of those with ADRD to meet the challenges of caring for family members or friends with these life-altering diseases.

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