



Hospice Highlights

World Alzheimer's Month

By Diana Wood

Alzheimer's and other types of dementia are becoming more and more prevalent. Every September, people come together from all around the world to raise awareness and to challenge the stigma that persists around dementia. September 2021 marks the 10th anniversary of this global awareness campaign. It is estimated that there are 50 million people world-wide afflicted with Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's disease is just one type of dementia, but there are many other types and causes of dementia. People sometimes use the terms interchangeably, but they are

not the same. Alzheimer's is a specific disease whereas dementia is the umbrella term for many different diseases affecting the brain.

Dementia describes a set of symptoms that broadly affect a person's cognitive functioning. Depending on the type and cause, dementia can affect someone's memory, create thinking and focus problems, diminish problem solving abilities, and hamper language use and perception.

Surprisingly facing stigma is often the biggest concern of people and their caregivers living with Alzheimer's. Those with the disease say they feel that they are being misunderstood because of the misconception's others have about the disease.

Stigma around Alzheimer's exists partly due to the lack of public awareness and understanding of the illness. And here's another thing that surprised me. . . . stigma and lack of awareness also impacts Alzheimer's disease research. The government funds Alzheimer's research at lower rates than other diseases, even when the cost of caring for Alzheimer's patients is significantly higher. This is completely unfair and must change. But here's the thing. Change starts with you and me. We must be part of the solution. Together we can have a powerful voice to help raise awareness, end the stigma, and advocate for more support and research.

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Terrace Hospice Society

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