

DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMERS DISEASE

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Early prevention of Alzheimer's disease: Scientific justification and current strategies

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Increasing evidence from longitudinal imaging studies and prospective epidemiological observations suggests that Alzheimer's pathology is present decades before a dementia diagnosis. What is now referred to as late-onset Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is thus likely to be a clinically silent disorder of mid-life rather than a disease of old age. This view is further supported by risk factor studies which demonstrate that targeting mid-life exposure to the principal risk factors may significantly reduce dementia incidence. Current evidence suggests that a change in clinical approach notably involving promotion of cardiovascular health in persons with a family history of Alzheimer's disease may considerably delay dementia onset and also that the development of biomarkers at this early stage will lead to the possibility of pre-clinical trials. Two international initiatives are described; the prevent multi-site Project and the EPAD Clinical Trials Platform which are currently developing new protocols for pre-clinical treatment.

Biography

Karen Ritchie is a Neuropsychologist and Epidemiologist who began her career with the Health Services Evaluation Unit, University of Oxford and the Social Psychiatry Research Unit, MRC Australia. She is currently Director of the French National Institute of Medical Research (INSERM) Neuropsychiatry unit in Montpellier, France. She has also worked as an Advisor to WHO, the French National Institute of Health Surveillance and as an Board Member of the European Institute of Women's Health. She has over 350 peer-reviewed publications.

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