

CAN SMOKING LEAD TO DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

Recent studies have made a strong case for a link between smoking and dementia and Alzheimer's disease in elderly people with a history of heavy smoking.

Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, California, and team of Swedish researchers teamed up and surveyed over 20,000 middle-aged individuals and then followed them for an average of 23 years. The study factored in other possible risk factors that are known to be a cause of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, including race, age, and other medical predispositions.

The results were alarming. According to the study, for two-pack-a-day smokers, the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease more than doubled compared to non smokers. For those who smoked one to two packs, the risk increased by 44 percent, and for those who smoked about half a pack a day, the risk was increased by 37 percent. Results were the same among participants without a family history of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The results also found no difference among different races or between genders.

One major smoking-related medical problem that increases the chances of cognitive issues is the reduced blood flow to the brain from artery damage and higher rate of strokes. Other adverse effects of smoking that can damage the brain include inflammation and oxidative stress, in which the body cannot detoxify reactive oxygen and repair the damage it causes.

It is never too late to quit smoking. Smoking cessation reduces the chances of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease or at least delay its symptoms. The sooner you quit, the higher the chances of a healthier, more active brain into old age.

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References:

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