



NOTE TO HEALTH INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Subject: European initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias

The most common causes of dementia in EU are Alzheimer's disease (about 50-70% of cases), the successive strokes which lead to multi-infarct dementia (about 30%); other causes are Pick's disease, Binswanger's diseases, Lewy-Body dementia and others. Data on the prevalence on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are available across the EU collected by Alzheimer Europe. However, these estimates must be treated with caution, as the type of source varies considerably in scale and accuracy by Member State. An estimated 7.3 million Europeans (in 27 Member States) between 30 and 99 years of age suffered from different types of dementias in 2006 (14.6 per 1 000 inhabitants). Within this group, more women (4.9 million) than men (2.4 million) were affected.

Legal basis

During French Presidency the Council adopted on December 2008 the 'Council Conclusions on public health strategies to combat neurodegenerative diseases associated with ageing and in particular Alzheimer's' disease addressed to Member States and the Commission .Following this, the Commission has adopted the 22nd July 2009 the 'Communication from the Commission COM(2009) 380/4 to the European Parliament and the Council on a European initiative on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias'.

At the same time the Commission adopted a proposal addressed to the Council, 'Proposal for a Council Recommendation on measures to combat neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Alzheimer's, through joint programming of research activities', inviting the MS to work towards a common vision of how research cooperation and coordination at European level can help us to understand, detect, prevent and combat Neurodegenerative diseases, especially Alzheimer's disease, and develop a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) establishing medium to long-term research needs and objectives, including an implementation plan establishing priorities, milestones and timelines.

Actions

The Commission has selected for funding in 2009 an Operational Grant to be implemented by Alzheimer's Europe;

To implement the Commission Communication a Joint Action between Commission and Member States (to be financed in 2010 by the Health Programme) has been launched, led by the Haute Autorité de Santé (France), having as main objectives the actions specified in the Commission Communication as well as the results of the EuroCode (European Collaboration on Dementia) Project supported by the Public Health Programme. A Panel of Experts on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias met last 14th December 2009 in order to prepare this

Joint Action. Main objectives are: (i) To incorporate the 'dementia dimension' into the European Union's ongoing and future actions on health prevention, especially those related to cardiovascular health and physical activity; (ii) To produce a citizen's summary of dementia prevention measures under a 'Healthy brain lifestyle' set of recommendations. (iii) To map the existing and emerging good practices related to treatment and care for persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and to improve the dissemination and application of such practices (using, when possible, the Structural Funds); (iv) To improve epidemiological data on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, implementing the conclusions of the EuroCoDe Project using also the planned European Health Examination Survey to provide new Europe-wide data on the prevalence of people with early cognitive deficiencies; (v) To map the existing and emerging good practices related to treatment and care for persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and to improve the dissemination and application of such practices, and (vi) To establish, using the facilities provided by the Health Programme, a European Network for rights and dignity of people with dementia, which should formulate recommendations on dignity, autonomy and social inclusion, and to share best practices on respecting the rights of vulnerable adults and tackling patient abuse.

The Commission will support and highlight the next Alzheimer Europe Conferences (Luxembourg, 30 September-2 October 2010 and Warsaw, 6-8 October 2011) and a Dementia and Ageing Conference (Brussels, November 2010) to disseminate activities of the Joint Action.

Further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_information/dissemination/diseases/alzheimer_en.htm

Action for the Committee:

X	For information
	For comments
	For agreement