

AGEING GRACEFULLY

# *Diversity of Dementia*



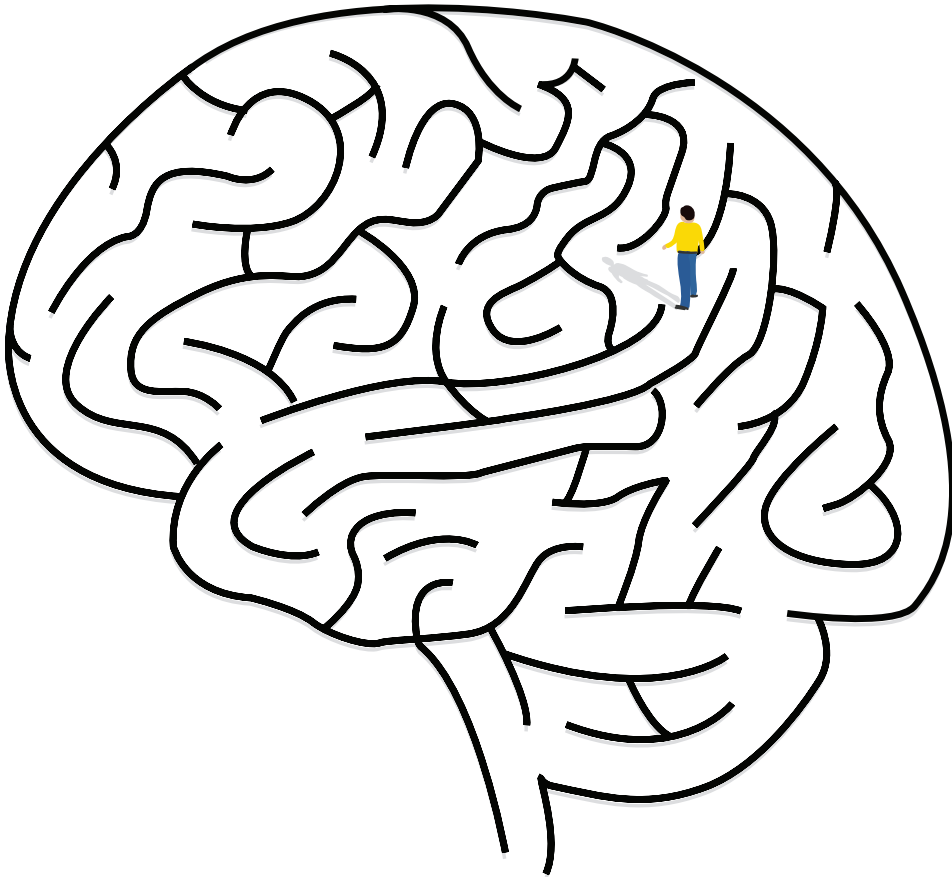
**World Health  
Organization**

Regional Office for South-East Asia



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## **Ageing Gracefully: Diversity of Dementia**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>AD</b>     | Alzheimer disease                |
| <b>CT</b>     | Computed tomography              |
| <b>FTD</b>    | Frontotemporal dementia          |
| <b>GDO</b>    | Global Dementia Observatory      |
| <b>LBD</b>    | Lewy body dementia               |
| <b>LMIC</b>   | Low- and middle-income countries |
| <b>MID</b>    | Multi-infarct dementia           |
| <b>MRI</b>    | Magnetic resonance imaging       |
| <b>NCD</b>    | Noncommunicable diseases         |
| <b>NGO</b>    | Nongovernmental organizations    |
| <b>SEAR</b>   | WHO South-East Asia Region       |
| <b>TLC</b>    | Tender loving care               |
| <b>U.S.A.</b> | United States of America         |
| <b>VaD</b>    | Vascular dementia                |
| <b>WHO</b>    | World Health Organization        |

## FOREWORD



Dementia is an umbrella term for several diseases that are mostly progressive, affecting memory, other cognitive abilities and behaviour that interfere significantly with a person's ability to maintain the activities of daily life. As early as 800 BC Ayurvedic physicians from India used the Sanskrit term “smriti bhransh” to describe loss of memory in older people. However, it was only in 1906 that German doctor Alois Alzheimer described a case of memory loss in a medical publication. This condition is now known as Alzheimer disease. The manifestation of this disease is called dementia.

In 2015, dementia affected 47 million people worldwide, and is predicted to increase to 75 million in 2030 and 132 million by 2050. Globally, nearly 9.9 million people develop dementia each year; this figure translates into one new case every three seconds, making dementia an important public health issue to address. Dementia has several implications for the WHO South-East Asia Region, nearly 60% of people with dementia currently live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and the majority (71%) of new cases is also expected to occur in such countries. Evidence shows nearly 90% of people with dementia in LMICs do not receive any diagnosis, treatment or care.

WHO is supporting Member States in developing expertise in the identification, diagnosis and management of persons with dementia. The Region will be working towards mainstreaming dementia into the policies for

noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), as dementia and NCDs have shared risk factors. The Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017 adopted the Global Action Plan on the public health response to dementia.

The WHO Global Dementia Observatory (GDO) is a knowledge translation and exchange platform to support evidence-based service planning and strengthening of policies and social care systems. Three Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region – Bangladesh, Maldives and Myanmar – are participating in the first phase of this initiative.

This publication on dementia is focused on improving dementia awareness, reducing stigma and accelerating focus on risk reduction by promoting a better understanding of dementia, including respect for human rights of people living with it. I believe this publication will be valuable information for older people, families with dementia patients, and policy-makers. The aim is to increase knowledge to address barriers to dementia care and to have dementia policies, plans and programmes framed within a public health approach.

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