

RISK REDUCTION OF COGNITIVE DECLINE AND DEMENTIA

WHO GUIDELINES



**World Health
Organization**

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FOREWORD

Dementia is a rapidly growing public health problem affecting around 50 million people around the world. There are nearly 10 million new cases every year and this figure is set to triple by 2050. Dementia is a major cause of disability and dependency among older people and can devastate the lives of affected individuals, their carers and families. Additionally, the disease inflicts a heavy economic burden on societies as a whole, with the costs of caring for people with dementia estimated to rise to US\$ 2 trillion annually by 2030.

While there is no curative treatment for dementia, the proactive management of modifiable risk factors can delay or slow onset or progression of the disease. In May 2017, the Seventieth World Health Assembly endorsed a *Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia 2017–2025*, urging Member States to develop, as soon as feasible, ambitious national responses to address this challenge. Dementia risk reduction is one of the seven action areas in the global action plan.

These new WHO guidelines provide the knowledge base for health care providers, governments, policy-makers and other stakeholders to reduce the risks of cognitive decline and dementia through a public health approach. As many of the risk factors for dementia are shared with those of non-communicable diseases, the key recommendations can be effectively integrated into programmes for tobacco cessation, cardiovascular disease risk reduction and nutrition.

I urge all stakeholders to make the best use of these recommendations to improve the lives of people with dementia, their carers and their families.

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