

UsAgainstAlzheimer's Survey on Brain Health Summary of Findings October 13, 2021

UsAgainstAlzheimer's fielded a survey from September 17-27, 2021, on attitudes toward brain health, with responses from 1,435 people who were current or former caregivers, 'at risk' for diagnosis, people interested in brain health, and diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)/Alzheimer's disease (AD) or another dementia.

Key findings include:

- Respondents who identified as “interested in brain health” reported engaging in multiple activities to manage it, and seeking information from a variety of sources, most notably the news and internet
- While 72% of the A-LIST population that identified as “interested in brain health” indicated they spoke with family members about brain health in general, 42% of those respondents spoke with a physician about their own brain health
- Of those respondents who spoke with their health care provider, 26% received information on brain health to take home
- Those respondents who did not consult a physician about brain health said neither they nor their physician thought to bring up the topic during their visits

Brain Health is considered important, and respondents don't understand enough about how to maintain it

- Respondents reported near universal acceptance (99%) of the importance of taking care of brain health
- 23% of respondents saw themselves as very knowledgeable about brain health

Respondents took a range of steps to take care of their brain health, until diagnosed with Alzheimer's or another dementia

- 81% of respondents reported that they do things in their day-to-day lives to take care of their brain health, while 5% did not, and 14% were 'unsure'
- Key activities to take care of brain health included
 - reading (84%),
 - exercising (80%),
 - getting enough sleep (71%),
 - eating a brain healthy diet (69%),
 - maintaining healthy body weight (66%),
 - socializing regularly (66%),
 - doing puzzles (56%),
 - managing health conditions (54%),
 - managing stress (53%), and
 - playing brain games (51%)
- Several of these activities were not done as often once a person was diagnosed, including reading, eating a healthy diet, and maintaining healthy body weight.
- Respondents also said they did not smoke (84%), and moderated alcohol use (79%)
- Survey respondents learned about actions to take care of brain health from news articles (69%), internet searches (63%), and health care providers (47%)

- Those with a diagnosis and current/former caregivers learned more from health care providers than other respondents
- 42% of current caregivers sought support from caregiver groups
- 16% of diagnosed individuals and 12% of current caregivers sought support from patient support groups
- Diagnosed individuals read less news for information (39%) than other respondents (73%-79% by category)

There were many obstacles in day-to-day life to caring for brain health

- Key obstacles included: don't know what really works vs gimmick (28%), too overwhelmed with other things (24%), too tired (18%), and no time/too busy (16%)
 - Current caregivers were overwhelmed with other things more often (35%)
 - About one of four (27%) respondents cited no obstacles to caring for brain health

Brain health conversations are occurring differently depending on status as diagnosed, caregiver, or 'interested in brain health'

- 72% of respondents 'interested in brain health' talked with their family about memory or brain health, in general
- 42% of respondents 'interested in brain health' talked with their physician about their own brain health
- Respondents who did speak with a physician were more often those with a diagnosis or caregivers; nearly three-quarters (74%) of the group answering this question did not receive any brain health information
- Of those who did not speak with their physician, 43% said they do not have a brain health problem, 40% never thought to discuss it, and 35% said their provider never brought it up
- Only half of all survey respondents were extremely confident raising the topic of memory or brain health with their healthcare provider

82% of the 'at risk' for dementia population believed that Alzheimer's disease or another dementia runs in their family

- About a quarter of this group reported they frequently forget things (27%), or have health conditions that are high risk factors (i.e. diabetes, high blood pressure, hearing loss, depression) (23%)

Survey Methodology: The survey, taken September 17-27, 2021, by the UsAgainstAlzheimer's A-LIST® and partners, had 1,435 responses overall from people living with Alzheimer's or another dementia (n=93), current caregivers (n=217), former caregivers (n=262), people with a significant likelihood of developing the disease (n=458), and those interested in brain health (n=405). This research is overseen by an Institutional Review Board (IRB.)

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