




spotlight on health

Alzheimer's Disease—A Growing Concern For The Hispanic Community

(NAPSA)—Hispanic Americans are the fastest-growing older population in the United States, and, as a result, the Hispanic community is facing a major health crisis with Alzheimer's disease. About 200,000 Hispanics are currently living with the disease. That number is expected to skyrocket to more than a million by 2050, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

Alzheimer's disease can take away a person's ability to remember things, learn new tasks, or perform everyday activities such as eating and dressing. Alzheimer's is a devastating disease that affects the entire family; people who live in multigenerational settings (e.g., grandparents, parents and children) are especially vulnerable.

In the face of this health crisis, it is essential that families understand Alzheimer's disease and its symptoms so they can best care for their loved ones and get them the help and treatment they need.

More than 63 percent of Hispanics report not knowing enough about Alzheimer's disease to recognize its symptoms. 


Recognizing Symptoms

Understanding Alzheimer's disease and its symptoms is key to a proper diagnosis. Symptoms include gradual memory loss, impaired judgment, disorientation, difficulty in learning, and language problems. If you notice a

Is It Alzheimer's Disease?

Is your parent or grandparent acting just a little unusual? Are they having...

- Difficulty placing a telephone call?
- Unexplainable mood swings?
- Trouble finding their way home?

This could be a sign of Alzheimer's disease, so talk to the doctor to make sure your loved one is getting the proper treatment and care. 

loved one is having difficulty performing everyday activities like planning a meal and remembering dates, or has a sudden mood change, you may be seeing signs of Alzheimer's disease. According to Ricardo Pardo, M.D., of the Jacinto Medical Group in Baytown, Texas, "People often mistake symptoms of the disease as 'normal' signs of old age."

Diagnosis and Treatment

Now that you can recognize the symptoms, be sure to see a doctor if you think that your loved one may have Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Pardo says, "Once someone is diagnosed, treatment can begin immediately. Although there is no cure, treatment with available prescription medications can make a real difference in the lives of patients and caregivers, and help patients maintain the ability to do things like dressing and bathing."


One study showed that using combination therapy including two different classes of currently available prescription medications—Namenda plus Aricept—can provide significant benefits to patients with moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease, including:

- Maintaining functional independence—the ability to perform daily activities, such as grooming or conversing
- Improving behavior, such as less agitation, irritability, and appetite changes
- Slowing cognitive decline in the areas of memory and language.

Caregiver Support Team

"Caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease can put extra stress on anyone," says Dr. Pardo. "Work with family members, friends, doctors and nurses to create a 'team' to help with the responsibility and reduce stress. Building a team can help ensure proper treatment and care, and reduce the burden of the disease on everyone involved."

Support groups can also help by providing a place to share experiences, information and encouragement. For more information, talk to your doctor and visit www.alzfdn.org.

Hispanics are more likely to participate in a support group than caregivers of other ethnic groups. 

NAMENDA® (memantine hydrochloride) is indicated for the treatment of moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease. NAMENDA is available by prescription only.

Important Risk Information About NAMENDA

Who should NOT take NAMENDA?

NAMENDA should not be taken by anyone who is allergic to NAMENDA or has had a bad reaction to NAMENDA or any of its components.

What should be discussed with the health care provider before taking NAMENDA?

Before starting NAMENDA, talk to the health care provider about:

• All of the patient's medical conditions, including kidney or liver problems. In patients with severe kidney problems, the dose of NAMENDA may need to be reduced

- All prescription or over-the-counter medications the patient is taking or planning to take
- The recommended dosing and administration of NAMENDA.

What are the possible side effects of NAMENDA?

The most common side effects associated with NAMENDA treatment are dizziness, confusion, headache and constipation. This is not a complete list of side effects.