DNA home-testing kit released in the UK

Tuesday 2 December, 2014

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A personal DNA testing kit that gives users an insight into their genetic make-up has gone on sale in the UK today (Tuesday 2 December 2014). The service claims to reveal risk factors for developing various diseases including Alzheimer's disease, alongside offering more than 100 reports on health, trait and ancestry information. 23andMe, who provide the service, said the service was not a diagnostic tool.

Alzheimer's Society comment:

'If you are worried about your memory, your GP should be the first port of call – not a home DNA testing kit. Research has identified a number of genes that may play a role in the development of dementia but we don't know enough to use these as a diagnostic tool. While we know certain genes – like APOE4- can increase your risk of Alzheimer's disease, not everyone with the gene will go on to develop the condition.

'When it comes to dementia, genetics is only one part of a very complex puzzle. Lifestyle factors, not recognised by this test, also play an important role in determining your dementia risk. You can't do anything to change your genes but you can make healthy lifestyle choices to look after your brain. Research suggests that the best way to reduce your risk is to: exercise regularly; eat a Mediterranean diet and to not smoke.'

Dr Clare Walton

Research Manager

Alzheimer's Society

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

225,000 will develop dementia this year, that's one every three minutes

Alzheimer's Society research shows that 850,000 people in the UK will have a form of dementia by 2015. In less than ten years a million people will be living with dementia. This will soar to two million people by 2051

Dementia costs the UK economy over £26 Billion per year. This is the equivalent of more than £30,000 per person with dementia.

Alzheimer's Society champions the rights of people living with dementia and the millions of people who care for them

Alzheimer's Society works in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Alzheimer's Society supports people to live well with dementia today and funds research to find a cure for tomorrow. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by calling 0845 306 0898 or visiting alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society provides a National Dementia Helpline, the number is 0300 222 11 22 or visit alzheimers.org.uk

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