

Height associated with increased risk of dementia

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A study published in the British Journal of Psychiatry has found that people who are shorter have an increased risk of dying with dementia – with this risk found to be stronger in men.

The authors emphasised that being short does not cause dementia, but how tall a person is could inform the study of possible risk factors for dementia.

Responding to this, Dr Doug Brown, Director of Research and Development at Alzheimer's Society, said: 'The data suggests that very short people are at increased risk of dying with dementia. While the study was robust and detailed, because a very small number of people actually had dementia when they died it is very difficult to conclude that height is one of the most important risk factors for dementia.

'Future work in this area needs to understand exactly which factors that contribute to our height are important – whether that be childhood nutrition or genetic inheritance – and use that information to help us understand more about how dementia develops.

'Once fully grown there is nothing we can do to change our height, however we do know that we may be able to reduce our risk of dementia by making changes to our lifestyle. Not smoking, taking regular exercise and eating a healthy diet are all things that could improve our brain health.'

- 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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