UK research spend on dementia still too low, new study shows

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The amount of government money spent on dementia in the UK has risen significantly in recent years, but it is still too low when compared with the economic and personal impact the condition has, finds a study published in the online journal BMJ Open today (Monday 13 April).

Researchers assessed central government and charity research expenditure in 2012 into the UK's leading causes of death and disability: cancer, coronary heart disease, dementia and stroke. In 2012, all four conditions accounted for over half (55%) of all UK deaths and for 5.5 million disability adjusted life years (DALYs), which combine the number of years of life lost to early death, ill health, or disability.

The amount of funding was compared with the population impact of the individual conditions: prevalence, the number of years lost to early death, ill health, or disability, and the total health and social care costs.

Dr Doug Brown, Director of Research at Alzheimer's Society said:

'Dementia is one of the biggest health and social care challenges that the country faces today. Despite improvements in funding, this area of research is still neglected compared to other major health conditions. Investments in research into cancer and heart disease have delivered treatments and even some cures and we need to see the same in dementia.

There's a huge amount of progress currently being made by the dementia research community, but until there is more funding, we are limited in how quickly we can make life-changing discoveries. Alzheimer's Society has pledged to spend at least £100 million on dementia research over the next decade - more than ever before - but if we're going to improve the quality of care, develop better treatments and ultimately cure dementia we need politicians to pledge continued commitment and set out an ambition to create a step change in research funding.'

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