

Reflecting on the effect of Alzheimer's on women

It's not pleasant to think that 3.4 million women over the age of 65 are experiencing various stages of dementia and Alzheimer's nor to imagine that by 2050 there will be 8 million women.

As I writing this month's blog posts, it was depressing to find there is no cure for Alzheimer's anywhere near the horizon. It was also discouraging to discover **the double burden it will continually place on women** as caregivers to Alzheimer's patients and on those who eventually become patients.

But as I continued my Google searches, I uncovered many promising articles and studies that suggested there were ways of reducing the risks and possibly preventing the advancement of Alzheimer's. It also required not being taken in by hype and finding sources that were credible.

If I had to pick one pivotal source it would be article by Jean Carper in the Huffington Post, *"Looking for Alzheimer's Answers in All the Wrong Places."* Here was a woman with her own genetic Alzheimer's issue and a medical correspondent well versed in wading through medical literature language and interpretations.

Her perspective is that there are already sufficient studies pointing to the positive effects of diet and lifestyle changes in preventing Alzheimer's. While research may continue to study the accumulation of beta-amyloid plaque tangled fibers strangling the neuronal network, **any cure would be too late to undo the damage the brain has already incurred.** Carper's focus is on creating and maintaining brain health as early as possible.

While the National Institute of Health waits for more convincing evidence, Carper is changing the conversation to Alzheimer's being a "slow-developing chronic disease" if no preventative action is taken.

As women **we are the most vulnerable** because we live longer, and it is

because we live longer that our brains are more susceptible to progressive dementia.

No one knows how many years each of has left, but if we want them to be as healthy and mentally productive as possible, then **we have to make a commitment to ourselves – better diet, better lifestyle and better brains.**