Alzheimer’s disease: A Current Review

12th Sept. 2011 has been designated as “World Alzheimer Day”

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Alzheimer’s disease is now regarded as one of the most common diseases among the senior citizen. The number of people suffering from this disease doubles every five years, beyond the age of 65. Though there are no common causes known for this disease there are certain factors that can increase one’s chances for developing it. These include age, family history and heredity causes. Age being the main known risk factor while others may not be less important.

There is hardly any drug that can stop or cure this disease, an early diagnosis offers the best chance to treat the symptom. This disease involves a slow but continuous deterioration of brain function. This is also designated as a Dementia and is characterized by a number of other symptoms, such as deterioration of language skill, impaired judgment, beside memory loss. It involves more than five million American citizens and over eight million people from rest of the world.

It starts without any apparent symptom of memory loss but gradually the patients start complaining of memory lapses, especially, personal items. He may not recall where he left his glasses, pen or keys, which may follow to other more important things such as names of friends, promises, daily duties, paying bills etc.

The condition may slowly and gradually deteriorate and may lead to constant supervision and help. If not treated soon the patient may even become unaware of his surroundings and may even forget his personal history. They usually have abnormal sleep, may experience hallucination, disorientation and may not even find their way back home. As pointed out earlier there are no specific causes but some factors increase the possibility of acquiring this disease. People having parents or sibling suffering from Alzheimer have increased chances of inheriting it. Having more than one close relative suffering from Alzheimer disease increases the risk twice or thrice.

More and more research work is needed to high light its mechanism and scientists are busy in tracing its association with heredity factors. It is now pointing towards the apo E4 gene (apolipoprotein E gene) which helps to carry cholesterol in the blood. Blood pressure, stroke head injury heart diseases, diabetes, high cholesterol are also considered as high risk factor in curing Alzheimer’s disease.

An early diagnosis may help in elevating the situation by treating the symptoms. Several tests have been suggested to improve memory, especially on counting and language problems. It requires a scrutiny of the past record of general health, especially pertaining to any specific medical problems such as blood, urine and spinal fluid. CT (computer Tomography) scan is needed to detect the presence of certain protein deposit, especially plaque and tangles in the brain tissue.

Doctor are trying to delay or prevent the symptoms of Alzheimer through a combination of various health habit. Life style plays an important role in protecting our brain function with age. Our eating habit, routine exercises, mental and social activities, avoiding constant stress are all very important

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factor for normal health and for keeping ourselves mentally alert.

Diets such as whole gain food, olive oil nuts and cold water fish such as salmon thuna and trout are good diet. Omega-3 fatty acids berries, green leafy vegetable may help prevent the diseases. Red meat, fast food, processed food should be avoided. Supplements of folic acid, Vit. B12, Vit-D, Magnesium and fish oil preserve and improve brain health. No medicine has been found as a total cure for Alzheimer’s disease.