

Virtual Guest Speaker

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Cognitive Dysfunction - Slowing it Down



Active retirees is a philosophical cornerstone for Probus. Whether it's mental, social or physical, being active is essential as we age.

Why? Scientists have been researching the connection to alzheimers and/ or dementia and ageing for decades. Yes, there is the genetic factor (gene identified as APOE4) with around 25% of people around the world born with this gene (and 2-3% with two copies of the gene... thanks mum, thanks dad), but it does not necessarily mean that those with the gene will inherit significant cognitive impairment as they age.

As mentioned, research in this area is diverse but it appears that a few significant things will **hold off** or **slow down** cognitive dysfunction.

In an article by Times journalist/ editor Mandy Oaklander, “Our Bodies, Our Selves”, (*The Science of Alzheimer’s* Time Special Edition 2019, pp 40-45), Oaklander discusses ways in which lifestyle changes may help to protect the brain. In summary:

1. Listen to your heart

Treat hypertension, high lipids, cholesterol, obesity, Type 2 diabetes.

2. Emphasise exercise

Aerobic exercise **grows the volume of specific brain** regions eg hippocampus - major role in learning and memory.

3. Keep learning

Continued intellectual engagement develops stronger cognitive health. Write...read... learn a foreign language...join U3A

4. Be social

Richer social lives equal higher levels of cognition. Loneliness is connected with poorer brain health. Volunteer...

5. Sleep well

Studies link poor sleep with cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s.

6. Healthy diet

Mediterranean diet scores high... it limits alcohol consumption but allows 2 glasses a day.

Considering point 2, the research strongly encourages **aerobic exercise** within a regular and sustained time frame. Walking briskly every day, if you can, for at least 3 kms is a worthwhile goal.

Neurologist Majid Fotuhi (in Oaklander, p. 41, 2019) notes, “Diet, exercise, sleep and stress: those **are not considered culprits** for a problem as big as dementia... but for the first time we have evidence that the levels of **tau*** can change with lifestyle interventions such as exercise.”

Tau - proteins thought to be a marker for Alzheimer’s

Virtual session-Alzheimer’s by Dr Majid Fotuhi, click on [Yes, You CAN Grow Your Brain](#)

