

Second wake-up call for Canada to address the issue of dementia today

New landmark report reveals massive annual costs of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, ranking it the 18th largest economy.

September 21, 2010 - The **World Alzheimer Report 2010** was released today to mark World Alzheimer's Day and heighten awareness of the global economic impact of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Released by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), the *Report* paints a comprehensive picture of the ballooning personal, economic and social costs of dementia on world economies and draws a stark conclusion: Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are poised to be the single most significant health and social crisis of the 21st century.

"This is the second wake-up call for Canada," says Julie Wheeler, Executive Director of the Alzheimer Society of Kitchener-Waterloo. "World governments, including Canada, are woefully unprepared for the impending crisis unless we start acting now."

The *World Alzheimer Report 2010* comes on the heels of the Society's own report, ***Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society***, that was released last January.

"Today's release validates the findings of our Canadian study and is in line with recommendations we presented to the Federal Health Minister last January for a comprehensive national dementia strategy," explains Scott Dudgeon, *Rising Tide's* lead author. "We know from history that major diseases can be managed, even prevented, but this requires the political will to make greater investments in research and care options."

The *Report* also comes at a time when Canada and the Alzheimer Society prepare to host the 26th International Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International in Toronto in March.

"Canada does not currently have a National Dementia Strategy," adds Wheeler. "This is an opportune time for all levels of Government to step up to the plate and position Canada as a world leader in dementia care and research. The Alzheimer Society is eager to work with the Federal Government and its Provincial and Territorial counterparts to make sure this happen."

World Alzheimer Report key findings:

- worldwide costs of dementia will exceed 1% of global GDP in 2010 - at US\$604 billion. About 70% of the costs occur in Western Europe and North America
- if dementia care were a country, it would be the world's 18th largest economy. If

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- it were a company, it would be the world's largest by annual revenue exceeding Wal-Mart (US\$414 billion) and Exxon Mobil (US\$311 billion)
- the number of people with dementia will double by 2030, and more than triple by 2050
 - the costs of caring for people with dementia will rise faster than the prevalence. Costs of informal care and the direct costs of social care generally contribute similar proportions of total costs, while the direct medical costs are much lower
 - countries like the UK report Alzheimer's disease as one of the costliest illnesses, yet research and investment are at a significantly lower level compared to other major illnesses.
 - We've seen a 30% increase in the demand for our services locally within the past year alone.

Recommended actions:

The **World Alzheimer Report** urges the global community to take the following immediate actions:

- world governments must act urgently to make Alzheimer's a top priority and develop national plans to tackle its social and health consequences. Several countries have already moved in this direction, including France, Australia and England.
- governments and other major research funders must increase research funding to a level more proportionate to the economic burden of the disease. Recent UK data suggests that a 15-fold increase is required to reach parity with research into heart disease, and a 30-fold increase to achieve parity with cancer research.
- global governments must develop policies and plans for long-term care that anticipate and address social and demographic trends; these plans should focus on the needs of family caregivers and provide social protection for the most vulnerably affected
- the scale of the disease requires worldwide actions. It must be addressed as a top World Health Organization (WHO) priority and find its way onto the G-20 and G-8 Agendas

About Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

Dementia is a syndrome that can be caused by a number of progressive disorders that impair memory, thinking, behavior and the ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease is irreversible and is the most common form of dementia. It accounts for 64% of all dementia cases in Canada.

The risk of developing Alzheimer's disease doubles every five years after age 65. At 85, the odds of developing the disease increase 50%. According to the *World Alzheimer Report* released in 2009, approximately 35.6 million people worldwide are affected – that's more than the total population of Canada. This figure will increase to 65.7 million by 2030 and 115.4 million by 2050.

About the World Alzheimer Report

The report combines the most current prevalence data from the *World Alzheimer Report 2009* with enhanced data on low and middle-income countries from the 10/66 Dementia Research Group studies in Latin America, India and China. The report uses

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representative population-based samples from developing countries to quantify the cost of informal care systems previously excluded from impact estimates. The report was jointly authored by Professor Anders Wimo, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden; and Professor Martin Prince, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London, UK. To download the report: www.alz.co.uk/worldreport

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is Canada's leading nationwide health organization dedicated to people affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Society is a principal funder of Alzheimer's research and training and provides enhanced care and support to those affected, including their families and caregivers. The Society is a prominent voice within all levels of government. Active in more than 140 communities across Canada, the Society is also a founding member of ADI. Visit your local society at: www.alzheimerkw.com

About Alzheimer's Disease International

Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) is an international federation of 73 non-profit Alzheimer associations around the world in official relations with the World Health Organization. Each member provides support for people with dementia and their families. Learn more: www.alz.co.uk/adi

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