



# Dementia

## Why in News

Recently, the [WHO \(World Health Organisation\)](#) released a report '**Global status report on the public health response to dementia**'.

- It takes stock of progress made to date towards the 2025 global targets for dementia laid out in the WHO's '**Global Dementia Action Plan**' published in 2017.

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- It is a **syndrome** - usually of a chronic or progressive nature - that leads to **deterioration in cognitive function** (i.e. the ability to process thought) beyond what might be expected from the **usual consequences of biological ageing**.
- It **affects** memory, thinking, orientation, comprehension, calculation, learning capacity, language, and judgement.
  - However, the **consciousness is not affected**.
- 65% of total deaths **due to dementia are women**, and disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) due to dementia are roughly 60% higher in women than in men.

### ▪ Symptoms:

- **Memory loss, Difficulties with thinking**, Visual perception, Self-management, Problem solving or language and the ability to focus and pay attention.
- **Personality changes**, like depression, agitation, paranoia, and mood swings.

### ▪ Causes:

- When **brain cells are damaged** then dementia may occur. It can be **caused by a head injury, a stroke, a brain tumour** or due to [HIV infection](#).

### ▪ Treatment:

- There is **currently no treatment available to cure dementia**, though numerous new treatments are being investigated in various stages of clinical trials.

### ▪ Global Scenario:

- Dementia is currently the **seventh leading cause of death** among all diseases and one of the **major causes of disability** and dependency among older people worldwide.
- More than **55 million people** (8.1% of women and 5.4% of men over 65 years) are **living with dementia**.
- This number is estimated to rise to 78 million by 2030 and to 139 million by 2050.
- WHO's **Western Pacific Region has the highest number of people with dementia** (20.1 million), followed by the European Region (14.1 million).

### ▪ WHO's Efforts:

- **Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia 2017-2025:**

- It provides a comprehensive blueprint for addressing dementia.
- **Global Dementia Observatory:**
  - It is an international surveillance platform to **facilitate monitoring and sharing of information** on dementia policies, service delivery, epidemiology and research.
- **Guidelines on Risk Reduction of Cognitive Decline and Dementia:**
  - It **provides evidence- based recommendations** on interventions for reducing modifiable risk factors for dementia.
- **Mental Health Gap Action Programme:**
  - It is a resource for **generalists, particularly in low- and middle-income countries**, to help them provide first-line care for mental, neurological and substance use disorders.
- **Indian Initiatives:**
  - **Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India:**
    - It **calls for the government to have its plan or policy on dementia** which must be implemented in all states and funded and monitored by the health ministry.
  - **National Health Mission:**
    - It envisages achievement of universal access to equitable, affordable & quality health care services that are accountable and responsive to people's needs.

**Source: IE**

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