

Keeping pace

Progress in dementia research capacity

March 2017

Executive summary

As the UK's leading dementia research charity, we see the importance in keeping our finger on the pulse of what's happening in dementia research. In 2012, our Defeating Dementia report used bibliometric analysis to assess research productivity and capacity in the UK and other countries, revealing a sharp disparity between provision for research into dementia compared to other major diseases. The past five years have seen a backdrop of increased political support and financial investment for dementia research, but what difference has that made to the research landscape? To answer this question, we repeated this analysis to assess the progress made since our initial Defeating Dementia 2012 report was published.

Between 2008-9 and 2014-15

The number of UK dementia publications

has almost
doubled



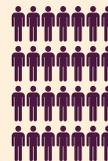
1,614
to
3,169



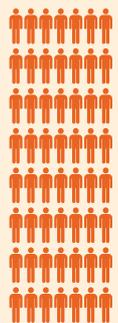
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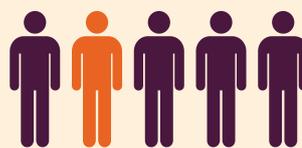


3,209
to
6,141



The ratio of UK
dementia researchers
to cancer researchers

is now



1 to 4

For every
£2 million of
disease costs,
in 2014-15 there was:



Dementia researcher



Cancer researchers

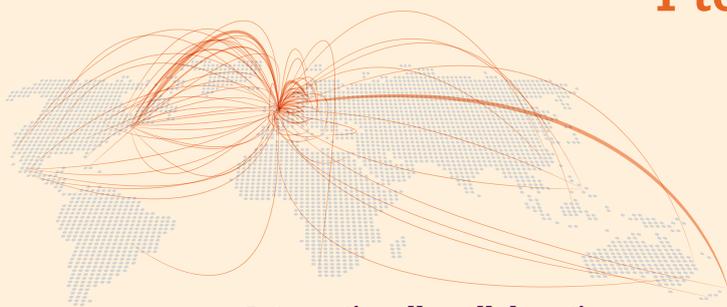


Coronary heart disease researchers



Stroke researchers

1 dementia researcher
compared to 10 for cancer,
5 for coronary heart disease
and 4 for stroke.



Internationally collaborative
UK dementia publications have
increased from 51% to 61%

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Recommendations

While there have been significant increases in the number of publications and the number of dementia researchers, investment still significantly lags behind other serious health conditions, particularly when compared to the economic costs of the condition. Dementia has made the greatest relative progress compared to the other conditions, however it has started from the lowest baseline.

We see clear evidence that long-term sustained investment is required to create a step change in research capacity for dementia research.

1 Enhanced Investment

We call on all current dementia research funders (government, charity and industry) to continue to increase investment in dementia research. This should include strategic investment in people, projects and supporting infrastructure to grow the research base. Initiatives such as the Dementia Discovery Fund and the Dementia Research Institute start to address the much needed step change, however stark differences in investment remain compared to other disease areas. For example, for every £2million of disease costs there were 10 cancer researchers for every 1 dementia researcher. To address this gap we need to increase dementia research investment given the significant impact on people and the economy.

2 Enable Collaboration

We call on the UK government, through and post Brexit negotiations, to ensure that the UK continues to participate in EU research programmes and venture capital schemes. Once the UK has left the EU it is vital to dementia research that the UK maintains and enhances its ability to collaborate with colleagues globally. In the future the government must ensure the UK's immigration system attracts high quality researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, pharmaceutical R&D, legal and regulatory experts, skilled technicians and students. It is only through attracting and retaining this world-leading expertise, in conjunction with international collaboration, that we can grow dementia research and the UK can retain its standing as a global leader in medical research.

3 Increased Sector Support

We call on the UK government to support dementia research and broader medical research landscape through the industrial strategy and future policy decisions, so that the UK remains an attractive place to conduct research for the benefit of people. This could be done by increasing the Charity Research Support Fund; involving medical research charities in public R&D funds such as the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund; maximising opportunities for research with patient data and ensuring the NHS is a world leader in medical research.