



# Dementia – If Only There Was a Cure

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As I held her hand the day mom took her last breath, it was a blurry day for me. If only there had been a cure, a way to have stopped what took her so early in life.

## **We're supposed to age gracefully, living past 70, aren't we?**

Mom died of vascular dementia 10 years ago, after battling 20 + years with her failing health. She was 70 years old - missed her 71st birthday by 3 months. Diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and strokes lead to vascular dementia in her final years of life.

Mom's destiny was determined by the diseases she had overtaking her body and life. Had she known better, perhaps she would have made different lifestyle choices. Once dementia set in, her ability to make healthy choices simply didn't exist.

## **There currently isn't a cure for dementia.**

If we could find the panacea for dementia, we'd all be rich in more ways than one. We'd save the world billions of dollars. We'd be healthy and live longer. But yet, we don't. Why is that? I often wonder. Do we think it is easy to live with dementia instead? Do we doubt dementia is that prevalent? The facts tell us otherwise.

## **Every 66 seconds someone in the US develops the disease.**

Dementia in its many forms doesn't discriminate, isn't stoppable, curable, or preventable once the disease begins. It causes irreversible brain damage and isn't a normal part of aging. Over 80% of Americans don't know the early warning signs. It is easy for us to use our healthy brains to find ways to prevent it before it starts. (Check out this short video from the Alzheimer's Association - their website contains great information.)

## **The known facts about dementia should scare the h\*ll out of us.**

Unfortunately, it only seems to scare us or move us to action if we are personally affected by it or our loved one is. I know that was my case. I know better now, but my lack of knowledge back then lead up to a loss greater than words can describe. If only I had known more.



## **Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death in the US.**

Dementia cases continue to rise. It kills more than breast and prostate cancer combined. 6 million Americans live with the most common form of dementia - Alzheimer's. By 2050 that number could rise to 1 trillion.

## **1 in 3 seniors dies from some form of dementia.**

If the predictions are right, we are not prepared as a society to pay for the costs of care or treatment of comorbidities associated with poor health routines leading up to the diagnosis or development of dementia. As a baby boomer, AKA the generation expected to push the numbers affected over the 16 million mark, I'm terrified to think of the rapid rate of growth of the disease.

## **We have to find a way to stop dementia before it starts.**

Prevention comes with lifestyle changes, focusing on healthy gut regimens, and EXERCISE! What's good for the heart is good for the brain.

## **Exercise every day to help give yourself better odds. But is that enough?**

It is only the start of a panacea. I encourage you to do what you can each day. Educate yourself for your tomorrow. You and your loved ones deserve a life without dementia! If you are caring for someone with dementia, my heart goes out to you - treasure every moment - hug your loved one every chance you get!