



**Alzheimer's Disease  
International**

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Dr Margaret Chan  
Director General  
World Health Organization  
Avenue Appia 20  
1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland

1 March 2013

Dear Dr Chan,

We write to bring your attention to the fact that the current draft of the NCD global action plan has unfortunately narrowed the non-communicable disease (NCD) agenda created by the UN High Level Meeting, which, in addition to focusing world attention on the “big 4” and a primary prevention strategy, clearly identified Alzheimer’s disease as a major NCD and actionable area (66L.1, 18). As you may recall, Alzheimer’s disease was specifically added during the negotiations between member states during the HLM that produced the final political declaration.

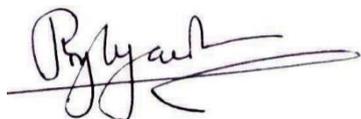
This is an unfortunate missed opportunity to link the global action plan on these major conditions to action on dementia, particularly because of increasing information on how dementia shares some of the fundamental risk factors with the other NCDs (low levels of physical activity and hypertension) and some NCDs themselves greatly increase the risk of dementia, especially diabetes. We also believe integrating brain health messaging into NCD health promotion campaigns is valid and feasible, as has been shown in Australia and contemplated as an action in many national and sub national government Alzheimer plans. This is especially important as the actions one might take for brain health (increasing physical activity, not smoking, avoiding diabetes) are otherwise healthy and contribute to overall wellness and healthy ageing. Concern about dementia can provide another lift to public health campaigning on NCDs.

Further, Alzheimer’s disease in itself is a rising cause of mortality and morbidity all over the world, with an estimated 35.6 million persons with dementia in 2010 and 66 million by 2030. Nearly all of this growth in prevalence will take place in lower and middle income countries. The cognitive impairment from dementia makes self-care more difficult for those with other chronic disease, more costly and more challenging to health care systems that are not yet equipped to deal with NCDs. In April 2011, WHO launched a landmark report *Dementia, a Public Health Priority* that documents the case and the new Global Burden of Disease figures show the growing impact, especially in lower and middle income countries.

Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), as the principal NGO in the space, has made proposals to the secretariat and to governments that action on dementia surveillance would be a logical step to include in the NCD plan. There is currently a lack of consensus on measures that we see in the other targets and indicators in the draft plan and monitoring framework.

We ask that you do not ignore the direction of the High Level Meeting and include Alzheimer's surveillance as an element of the final plan. The ADI proposals and offer of our assistance in a multi-sectoral effort on surveillance and on risk factors in dementia is attached for your further background information.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Jacob Roy Kuriakose  
Chairman  
Alzheimer's Disease International



Marc Wortmann  
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Alzheimer's Disease International