IS ALZHEIMER’S CRISIS ADEQUATELY PERCEIVED IN ROMANIA?

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Background: An early diagnostic is crucial in slowing down the progression of cognitive impairment in patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Aims: We tried to identify the leading reasons for AD patients' late presentation and for AD underdiagnosis in Romania in an attempt to identify issues to be addressed in future public awareness campaigns.

Methods: We cross-compared the estimates provided by various local publications for AD prevalence in Romania in an attempt to estimate overall AD awareness for the public and medical staff.

Results: A significant share of overall population and medical staff tends to deem cognitive decline as normal in elders. AD is often underdiagnosed or diagnosed in advanced stages, mainly due to common misconceptions (i.e. cognitive decline is normal in elders) which make the reasons for the initial presentation (i.e. mild and moderate cognitive impairment) seem trivial and therefore quite often ignored. Elders and their carers also reported difficulties in gaining access to specialized geriatric services and counseling. Denial and fear of unavoidable are also common.

Conclusions: Early AD signs need to be known both to overall populations and to family doctors. Healthcare restrictions preventing family doctors from becoming actively involved in screening for early signs of cognitive impairment also need to be loosened.