



The **MASE** Monthly Newsletter

January 2016



Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Happy New Year



New beginnings, fresh starts, reaffirmations of love and promises for a brighter future all come to mind as we ring in a **New Year**. There are the superficial, yet purposeful, promises we make to ourselves. We resolve to get in shape, lose weight, improve career paths, and the like. Then, there are the heartfelt promises we make to others, whether aloud or in our minds. We want to care more, express love more, reverse bad feelings in old relationships or seek out new loving relationships. Whatever the words are that you whisper at mid-night on 31 December, may they bring you a year where you find fulfillment, the inner strength to cope with the many trials that will test you, and above all the patience to deal with your everyday lives.

The MASE salutes all our wonderful Carers and send all good wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Some frequently asked questions about Dementia

What is the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia? The word dementia is used to describe a set of symptoms. Symptoms of the different forms of dementia can vary a great deal and can include memory loss, confusion, and mood and behaviour changes.

Dementia can be caused by a number of different diseases, with Alzheimer's disease the most common. Other diseases that cause dementia include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and fronto-temporal dementia. In some cases, dementia is thought to be caused by both Alzheimer's disease and either vascular dementia or dementia with Lewy bodies. You might hear this called mixed dementia.

I keep forgetting things, have I got Alzheimer's? Most of us forget things every day, like people's names or where we put our keys, but this is a normal part of life and not necessarily a sign of Alzheimer's or dementia. In dementia, memory loss is more serious than forgetting things occasionally – it is memory loss that starts to interfere with everyday life. There are many reasons why people become forgetful. Some medicines and drugs can affect memory. Depression, anxiety, vitamin deficiency and thyroid problems can also cause forgetfulness, so it's important to get the right diagnosis. If you are worried about your memory, if it's getting worse, or interfering with everyday life, then you should talk to your GP.

Does dementia run in the family? As dementia becomes more common as people get older, many of us will have a relative living with the condition – but this does not mean we will inherit it. Most of the time the genes we inherit from our parents will only have a small effect on our risk of developing dementia. In most cases our likelihood of developing dementia will depend on our age and lifestyle, as well as the genes we have.

Is it true that Alzheimer's and dementia only affect old people? No, but most people with dementia are over the age of 65. In the UK over 40,000 people with dementia are under 65, around 5% of the total. Many of these people are likely to be in their 50s or early 60s, but some rare forms of dementia can affect people even younger.

Are there more women than men with dementia? Yes. In the UK 61% of people with dementia are female and 39% are male. This is mostly because women tend to live longer than men and as dementia becomes more common as we age, there are more women to develop the condition. Some studies have suggested that other factors may affect the number of women and men with dementia, but there is no firm evidence that women are more likely than men to develop dementia at a particular age.

Why isn't there screening for dementia? At the moment, screening the general population for dementia is not recommended. This is for several reasons. Firstly there is no simple and accurate way to identify people with early dementia. Also, there is not enough evidence yet to suggest that screening people who don't have concerns about their memory is beneficial in the long term. Research is ongoing in this area.

Elaine Dunlop ☎ 01785 823110 or 07812 440226
Daphne Sharp ☎ 01785 211140 or 07939 505455

MASE Co-ordinators

✉ Elaine.dunlop12@btinternet.com
✉ Daphne.scharp@ntlworld.com

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

Carers how to deal with feeling guilty

People who care for someone with dementia often talk about feeling guilty, even if others are reassuring them that they are doing the best they can. Here are some of the issues that can cause these feelings. It explains why it is important to deal with them, and suggests some ways to go about doing this.

As a Carer, you are likely to feel a wide range of emotional responses to your situation - both positive and negative. This is because, although caring can be very rewarding, it is also hard work and can be extremely stressful. Some of the emotions that arise, such as frustration and anger, are healthy responses to challenging circumstances. They can be useful, helping people to move forward. But other emotions, such as guilt, can be more difficult to deal with, and leave people feeling powerless or 'stuck'.

While each person's experience is different, guilt can be a very tiring emotion, consuming energy that you need for other tasks. If you have identified that you have feelings of guilt, you have already taken the first step towards addressing these feelings. The next steps are to:

- ★ work out where these feelings come from
- ★ realise that you are not alone in feeling this way
- ★ find ways to develop a more positive attitude and to be more forgiving of yourself.
- ★ Remember to be kind to yourselves. The work you are doing is absolutely incredible, and it is only natural that you will feel tired and worn out at times. You are after all only human, so give yourselves the 'pat on the back' that you rightly deserve.

For A Healthier New Year have a HUG every day by Dr David Angus

Share more cuddles - if you want to optimise your immune defences, hugging could be key. Like a magic wand, human touch has the power to change our heart rate, lower blood pressure and cortisol levels, spark the release of feel-good chemicals in the brain and stimulate the hippocampus - the area that regulates memory.

Researchers from the Universities of Virginia and Pittsburgh monitored more than 400 adults over two weeks, asking them about their daily hug counts and social interactions.

Then the people were sent to rooms on an isolated hotel floor where they were exposed to a common cold virus.

About three-quarters became infected and a third showed obvious signs of illness. But those who had the most living social interactions sailed through the infection with fewer symptoms.



Researchers said social support, in particular, hugging and touching, reduced symptoms by **32%....**
So the answer is to keep cuddling.

The secret of being HAPPY is accepting where you are in life and making the most of every single day.

**CUDDLING IS
MORE EFFECTIVE
THAN SLEEPING PILLS
WHEN IT COMES TO
ACHIEVING A GOOD
NIGHT'S REST.**

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

Registered Charity No: 1137193 - The Monthly Alzheimer's Support Evening Limited (MASE)

Company Limited by Guarantee No: 7228424

DISCLAIMER— Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of going to publication. MASE Group accept no liability for the accuracy of the text. Company limited by Guarantee in England & Wales. Registered No: 07228424 Registered Office: 3 Hartwell Grove, Stafford ST16 1RW.
MASE is a registered Charity - Number: 1137193 The Monthly Alzheimer's Support Evening Limited (MASE)