

Physician Fact Sheet On The Relationship Between Diabetes And Dementia

1. Persons with diabetes in midlife have about a two-fold increased risk for cognitive loss in later life.
2. Risk factors for diabetes such as midlife obesity and physical inactivity are also risk factors for Alzheimer's disease or vascular dementia in later life.
3. The human brain has substantial numbers of insulin receptors in the neocortex and hippocampus.
4. Insulin degrading enzyme activity may also affect the amount of cerebral amyloid.
5. A combination of diabetes and APOE 4 typing increases the risk for senile plaques and neurofibrillary tangles at time of death.
6. Long-term patient compliance for oral hypoglycemic medications is about 50%.
7. Diabetes is a risk factor for other health problems that increase the risk for dementia, including cardiac dysfunction and renal failure.
8. Randomized controlled studies will not be done to confirm the preventive benefit for cognition of lifetime glucose management.
9. Physicians can advise individuals at risk for dementia that weight control and proper diet may reduce the risk for later life intellectual loss.
10. Aggressive management of blood sugars in later life may provide a small enhancement for cognitive function.