

74% of Quebecers mistakenly believe that neurocognitive diseases like Alzheimer's are inevitable

On September 21, World Alzheimer Day, we are collectively mobilizing to raise awareness among Quebecers about the prevalence of major neurocognitive disorders (MNCD) in our society and highlight urgent recommendations to change progress in care and prevention of MNCD.

Quebec reality: A rising prevalence

The aging of the population, coupled with a lack of understanding of major neurocognitive disorders, places our society in front of a major challenge. [According to the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), by 2050, 150 million people worldwide will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. In 2019, [the global annual cost of MNCD](#) was estimated at US\$1.3 billion, a figure that is expected to more than double by 2030 to US\$2.8 billion. In Canada, [according to a study by the Alzheimer Society of Canada](#), the total costs of the Canadian healthcare system and those borne by caregivers amounted to \$10.4 billion in 2016. By 2031, this figure is expected to rise to \$16.6 billion.

In Quebec, [the data](#) are equally worrying: The number of people aged 40 and over diagnosed with MNCD has tripled in the past 20 years. Yet, according to a Léger survey conducted in June 2024, 74% of Canadians believe there is nothing they can do to prevent Alzheimer's disease, and [80% of the general public think neurocognitive impairment is a normal component of aging](#), which it is not. [The most recent research shows](#) that 45% of cases of MNCD are associated with modifiable risk factors.

The rapid progression of MNCD requires an immediate collective response.

Individually and collectively, we all have a role to play in improving knowledge about major neurocognitive disorders and people's care and support pathways. Ultimately, we must work to reduce the human, societal and economic costs associated with it.

To meet the challenge we face, we propose:

- Develop and promote evidence-based preventive programs that demonstrate the positive impact of healthy lifestyles on brain health for all age groups;
- Promote early identification and diagnosis and its benefits;
- Promote the deployment of ministerial orientations that prioritize the person living with a MNCD and the caregiver(s) around him, including care;
- Develop and implement clear and standardized care pathways that take into account the diversity of the service offer;
- Work with members of organizations defending the rights of people from minority communities to develop more inclusive services;
- Ensure universal access to care, innovative treatments and services for all Quebecers, taking into account the social determinants of health;
- Improve access to infrastructure and technology required to detect MNCD, while supporting research projects and centralization of evidence;

- Develop new inclusive public awareness campaigns and enrich the training of healthcare professionals through an educational curriculum complementary to their basic professional training.

Cognitive health is our priority. We have mobilized to honor the work done and that has to continue. What will you do for your cognitive health?

Some useful resources:

10 warning signs: *learn to recognize them!*

14 modifiable risk factors: *how can we act now on the risk factors that influence our overall health?*

Social determinants of health: *We must consider them to adapt care pathways.*

Check out our [official press release here](#).

Signatories of this letter :

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