

Dementia Risk May Triple for Black Americans by 2060

The increased risk is partly the result of Americans living longer than previous generations.

January 14, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

A study [published in Nature Medicine](#) found that the lifetime risk of developing [dementia](#) may be significantly higher than previously thought, [NBC News reports](#).

Today, about 10% of Americans over age 65 have been diagnosed with dementia. Indeed, about 7 million Americans are living with [Alzheimer's disease](#), a common type of dementia that affects memory, thinking and behavior.

According to existing studies, about 14% of men and 23% of women will develop dementia during their lifetime. The new study estimates that the lifetime [risk](#) is around 42% both for men and women, which may be explained by several factors, according to researchers.

Study leader Josef Coresh, MD, PhD, director of the Optimal Aging Institute at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, said the increase in risk and in the number of people living with dementia may be a result of Americans living longer than previous generations.

“Just the fact that the population is going to get older will mean the number of dementia cases will double overall,” Coresh told NBC.

Additionally, some older studies included less diverse groups of participants. Out of the more than 15,000 U.S. adults involved in the current study, about 25% were Black and more than half were women.

Researchers estimate that the number of U.S. adults living with dementia may double by 2060. For Black Americans, this number is expected to triple. Risk also jumped for women from 3% by age 75 to 21% by 85 and 48% by 95.

“We need to think about the causes for this risk and how to prevent it,” Coresh said.

The greatest known risk factor for the disease is advancing age, as most individuals with the disease are ages 65 or older, according to Real Health’s [Basics on Alzheimer’s](#).

In addition to family history and heredity, past research has found that higher rates of diabetes and high blood pressure, both of which are common among Black Americans, increases dementia risk too.

Racial discrimination may also be a risk factor for dementia. In fact, a study found that [Black Americans who experience racial discrimination](#) during midlife have an increased likelihood of showing signs of Alzheimer’s and neurodegeneration.

Another study found that many older [Black Americans lack awareness](#) regarding Alzheimer’s disease and its symptoms.

Some typical signs of Alzheimer’s include the following:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life, especially forgetting recently learned information or important dates or events;
- Changes in the ability to follow a plan or solve problems;
- Difficulty completing familiar chores, duties or work;
- Losing track of time, dates and places, resulting in confusion and uncertainty;
- Trouble reading, understanding visual images and judging distance;
- Problems speaking, repetitiveness during conversations and struggling with words;
- Misplacing objects and being unable to backtrack to find them.

To read more, click [#Dementia](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[\\$4.8M Grant to Study Alzheimer’s in Black Adults](#),” “[Research in Context: Can We Slow Aging?](#)” and “[Alzheimer’s Disease May Damage the Brain in Two Phases](#).”

