

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS

RESEARCH SUMMARY

TOPIC: FROM FOOTBALL STAR TO ALZHEIMER'S ADVOCATE: MICHAEL CLAYTON SPEAKS
REPORT: **MB #4758**

BACKGROUND: Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death for all Americans. In 2014, over 93,500 deaths across all 50 states and the District of Columbia occurred due to Alzheimer's disease and it's estimated that five million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's disease. However, Alzheimer's is actually not the sixth leading cause for African Americans, it's the fourth. Also, African American seniors are two to three times more likely to have Alzheimer's disease compared with caucasians. Scientists say there is an urgent need to promote informed decisions about Alzheimer's and dementia-related preventative behavior in African American communities. There are currently organizations aiming to expand this pool of information to whomever may need it. This includes strategies such as offering cognitive screening opportunities, providing continuing education hours for nurses, social workers, and health care professionals, and spreading information about risk factors and early warning signs to larger communities.

(Sources: <http://alzheimers.emory.edu/african-americans/index.html>,
<https://www.cdc.gov/features/alzheimers-disease-deaths/index.html>)

DIAGNOSING: Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disorder meaning that it gets worse over time. It causes brain cells to degenerate and eventually die. Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia and continuously causes a decline of thinking, behavioral and social skills, and one's ability to function independently. The early signs of the disease may be forgetting a recent series of events or the details of a conversation, but the most threatening thing about this disease is that it will eventually cause patients to forget their abilities to carry out everyday tasks. Current Alzheimer's medications may relieve symptoms temporarily or slow the speed of the decline and allow patients to retain independence for a time. However, there is no treatment that cures Alzheimer's. In advanced stages of the disease, complications from severe loss of brain function such as dehydration, malnutrition, or infection can result in death. Some symptoms and signs include but are not limited to: repeating statements or questions over and over, forgetting full conversations, appointments or events, routinely misplacing possessions and putting them in illogical locations, getting lost in familiar places, forgetting the names of family and friends as well as everyday objects, trouble finding the right words to express thoughts. You may also notice changes in behavior such as depression, social withdrawal, apathy, mood swings, distrust, delusions, and aggressiveness or irritability.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alzheimers-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20350447#:~:text=Alzheimer's%20disease%20is%20a%20progressive,person's%20ability%20to%20function%20independently>)

MOVING FORWARD: There are many clinical trials currently underway studying Alzheimer's prevention strategies. These include The Anti-Amyloid Treatment in Asymptomatic Alzheimer's Disease (A4) Study examining the effectiveness of a drug intended to prevent cognitive decline in high-risk patients through early intervention. Another is Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer Network Trials Unit (DIAN-TU) that aims to study drugs that target a genetic mutation in certain Alzheimer's patients, as well as The Alzheimer's Prevention Initiative (API) which includes both the Autosomal Dominant Alzheimer's Disease (ADAD) trial and the Generation Study that also aims to target the genetic mutation of certain Alzheimer's patients. There is a severe lack of volunteers for Alzheimer's clinical trials and it's one of the greatest obstacles in finding new

treatments. If you are interested in participating in a current clinical trial, use Alzheimer's Association [TrialMatch](#), a free, easy-to-use clinical studies-matching service that generates customized lists of studies based on user-provided information at
(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alzheimers-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20350447#:~:text=Alzheimer's%20disease%20is%20a%20progressive,person's%20ability%20to%20function%20independently>)

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com