



Media Coverage

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9

Looming dementia crisis brings call for more help

Kinling Lo

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David Tsang Fan-kwong, now in private practice after 20 years of public service, told a radio program yesterday that dementia will be a major problem in 20 years. He said five in every 100 people aged 65 and over have dementia. The rate goes up to one in five for those over 80 and one in three for those 90 or above.

The government's Census and Statistics Department has forecast that one-third of the population will be over 65 by 2041.

The case of a 45-year-old dementia patient, who went missing during a morning walk with her mother last week, raised awareness that the degenerative brain disorder may strike those who are younger.

Tsang said there is no proof of such a trend, and that Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of dementia, still accounts for 70 percent of dementia patients.

He suggested that unhealthy eating habits of food with high sugar and fat content and lack of exercise could be significant risk factors for those getting dementia at a younger age.

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David Tsang

betes could lead to multiple mini-strokes that deteriorate the brain and expose them to a higher risk of dementia."

He added that those with Down Syndrome could also suffer from dementia at a young age.

Dementia that leads to a loss of memory, problems with understanding, language, and judgment is not curable, but Tsang urged an improvement in government support for patients and their caregivers.

"We do not have enough caretakers in the health sector, or the support for family members to improve the quality of life of these patients," he said.

"We also cannot see any policy change or investment in the near future."

Eva Ng Mei-kuen, senior manager of the Christian Family Service Centre, said its Mind Lock Memory and Cognitive Training Centre provides sports and music therapy to keep patients connected to the community.

In-house care services are also provided for those who are more reluctant to communicate with strangers, but without government support, some grass-roots patients are not able to pay for this. kinling.lo@singtaonewscorp.com



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Member Agency of The Community Chest

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