Position paper

Testing for biomarkers to diagnose dementia mate wareware

Testing for biomarkers is not a conclusive way to diagnose dementia mate wareware

There are new blood tests available overseas to detect certain abnormal brain proteins (or biomarkers) that indicate whether a person may have a higher risk of developing dementia mate wareware. However, having these biomarkers does not necessarily mean a person will develop dementia mate wareware.

To diagnose dementia mate wareware, a person must show clear signs of cognitive decline that affect their daily life. Only health practitioners can confirm the diagnosis, and other tests as well as cognitive tests may be performed to rule out other conditions. Cognitive tests are most useful alongside an appropriate full clinical assessment by a health care practitioner when this is being undertaken to assess issues with memory or other thinking abilities.

The new blood tests for biomarkers are useful during clinical trials but are not for general use to screen for dementia mate wareware in people who have no signs of cognitive decline. Their use will be to determine possible causes of symptoms in symptomatic patients and to help with diagnosis of specific types of dementia mate wareware.

This position paper has been approved by the Alzheimers NZ Clinical and Scientific Advisory Group

Background

Recent breakthroughs mean there are tests available that can measure tiny amounts of protein in the blood that have come from the brain. Having a particular protein does not necessarily mean a person will develop dementia mate wareware but it may indicate a higher risk.

People at higher risk of dementia mate wareware can take steps to lower their risk. These steps, however, are recommended for all individuals as they age.

If a person does have dementia mate wareware, the blood tests can help identify which type of dementia mate wareware they have, which will help develop care and management plans.

Although there is currently no cure for dementia mate wareware, some treatments can help slow down its progression, particularly in mild to moderate dementia mate wareware stages. This means early and accurate diagnosis is one of the most effective management tools. While these blood tests are a significant step forward, they are not yet accessible in Aotearoa New Zealand and are a long way from being implemented at a clinical level.