

Barriers to Accessing Help



THE UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

Awareness

- Stigma and misunderstanding of dementia
- Māori and Pacific peoples:
Higher burden of modifiable risk factors

Diagnosis

- 50% undiagnosed, highest in Asian peoples
- Māori and Pacific peoples:
Diagnosed younger
More comorbidities at time of diagnosis
- Pacific peoples:
More severe symptoms at time of diagnosis

Treatment & Support

- Isolation and emotional burden of carers
- Lack of culturally safe dementia services
- Māori, Pacific & Asian peoples:
Lower use of dementia services
Higher burden on families
- Māori and Pacific peoples:
Lower use of anti-dementia medication

Barriers to accessing help: What are communities telling us?

Awareness

“...Does not want to tell people outside of her immediate family because she does not know how people would react or perceive her family.” **(Chinese)**

“You are (un)lucky to get Alzheimer’s or unlucky to get dementia. That’s your karma.” **(Indian)**

“I can’t explain to them what it is ... it upsets me when I myself can’t explain it.” **(Māori)**

“What actually is dementia? I have never heard of it.” **(Chinese)**

“There is no Samoan word for this palagi illness, forgetfulness is a sign of old age.” **(Samoa)**

Diagnosis

“If you never see the same health practitioner over years, and you only see them for 10 minutes, it’s really hard for that diagnostic journey to be made.” **(Pacific peoples)**

“We did change doctors, initially. We’ve had the same doctor for 30 odd years, and he initially said it was just stress. But [he] wasn’t accepting that so I got us into a new practice.” **(Pākehā)**

Treatment & Support

“...You have to go to your doctor and some doctors don’t want to give it [information on services] either.” **(Pākehā)**

“The main problem is that if you are from Fiji then you need someone who speaks Fiji Hindi...Language is the main problem and communication.” **(Indian)**

“Several facilities have been designed for Europeans, but there is no Chinese community centre.” **(Chinese)**

What are carers telling us?

“The thing is who looks after the carer when they are looking after someone with dementia, you know, nobody looks after the carer.” **(Māori)**

“There are expectations and responsibility at the children’s end.” **(Indian)**

“Partially obligation you know, because I’m the oldest. I feel it is my role.” **(Chinese)**

References:

1. Cheung G et al. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022;19(3):1280.
2. Dudley M et al. New Zealand Medical Journal. 2023;136(1586):73-83.
3. Fa’alau F et al. AlterNative. 2024;20(1):12–20.
4. Krishnamurthi RV et al. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022;19(3):1432.
5. Li F et al. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2024;21(7):946.
6. Symon V et al. Journal of primary health care. 2021;13(4): 317–322.
7. Smith E et al. (2019) A qualitative research report on living with dementia. Wellington, NZ: Litmus.