Alzheimer’s Update

Four of our members of Clinkscales Elder Law Practice recently returned from Phoenix. A portion of the program dealt with an update on Alzheimer’s research.

There is an Alzheimer’s research center located in Phoenix. One of the lead doctors/scientists spoke to us and gave us some really interesting information.

Seventy percent of all dementias are now considered Alzheimer’s. Sometimes delirium gets confused with dementia. The difference is that in dementia, there is something structurally wrong with the brain. That is not so with delirium. To put it in layman terms, dementia is a hardware problem; delirium is a software program.

One of the first things to go in dementia is the short-term memory. That’s located in the hippocampus part of the brain.

I know there is a lot of concern about Alzheimer’s being inherited. Generally, if Alzheimer’s manifests itself in age 75 and above, there is very little genetic component to it. If it is early onset, less than 75 years of age, there is an increased chance for a genetic component but only in 5% of the cases.

They now confirm there are some environmental factors that do affect the possibility of Alzheimer’s.

Physical activity seems to help prevent Alzheimer’s.

People with a higher education status tend to be less likely to have Alzheimer’s. The thought process is that the brain is more developed with more synapses. Dementia affects the synapses and the more there are, the less devastating the loss of a few synapses is.

People with Type II diabetes are more likely to develop Alzheimer’s.

People with hypertension also are more likely to get Alzheimer’s.

People that have had head injuries are more likely to develop Alzheimer’s.

Some good news is that the rate of Alzheimer’s seems to have decreased somewhat. There is a concern, however, that the decrease is going to be offset by increased numbers of obesity which leads to diabetes.

People 80 and above have a 50% chance of developing dementia/Alzheimer’s.
On the care front, there is a real movement to normalize treatment of Alzheimer’s. The nurse that spoke to us discussed how that, at one time, you kept secret if you had cancer. She would like to bring Alzheimer’s out of the closet, as cancer has been brought out of the closet.

While early Alzheimer’s may affect some activities, there are still many activities that the person with Alzheimer’s can still participate in.

If you are caring for someone with Alzheimer’s, and you need help, be specific on what type of help you need. In other words, if you need someone to come by the house so you can have two hours out, be real specific about that.

Have a confidante, whether you are the caregiver or the person with Alzheimer’s. Have a confidante that is not going to judge you.

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**2016 Walk to End Alzheimer’s**

**Saturday, October 8, 2016**

Registration at 10:30am  
Ceremony at 11am  
Walk at 11:10am

Big Creek Crossing (The Mall)  
2918 Vine St  
Hays, KS 67601

For more information visit  
act.alz.org/walk