

From Dementia Knowledge to Risk: Associations with Modifiable Lifestyle Factors in Older Australians



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Unhealthy weight and insufficient exercise were the most common risk factors. Lower dementia knowledge, literacy and self-efficacy were associated with higher cumulative dementia risk.

INTRODUCTION	METHODS	RESULTS	CONCLUSION																													
Dementia literacy is an essential public health concept for addressing dementia. Attitudes to dementia are important when considering motivations to engage in behaviours which reduce dementia risk¹. Aim to 1) characterise modifiable dementia risk factors amongst Australians 50 years and above and 2) explore associations between dementia knowledge, dementia literacy, and attitudes to dementia risk reduction with the presence of individual and cumulative risk factors (assessed through self report).	Participants National survey of 7753 individuals aged ≥ 50 years who had downloaded the ‘BrainTrack’ app. Measures Dementia Knowledge Assessment Scale (DKAS), Motivation to Change Lifestyle and Health Behaviours for Dementia Risk Reduction (MCLHB-DRR) scale, Consumer Access, Appraisal, and Application of Services and Information for Dementia (CAAASI-Dem) Risk factors: weight, diet, alcohol, smoking, exercise, sleep, hearing, social engagement, mood. Analyses adjusted for age, sex, education and geography.	A total of N=6,114 participants were included. <table><tr><th>Table 1. Participant Characteristics</th><th>Value</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>6,114</td></tr><tr><td>Age, mean (SD)</td><td>65.4 (8.2)</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>79.4%</td></tr><tr><td>University educated</td><td>43.5%</td></tr><tr><td>English at home</td><td>99.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Indigenous</td><td>1.3%</td></tr><tr><td>Metropolitan</td><td>60.8%</td></tr></table> Lower dementia knowledge (DKAS) was associated with the presence of insufficient exercise, sleep, and alcohol-related risk factors (all p<.05) and with a greater cumulative (combined) risk (p<.001).	Table 1. Participant Characteristics	Value	N	6,114	Age, mean (SD)	65.4 (8.2)	Female	79.4%	University educated	43.5%	English at home	99.4%	Indigenous	1.3%	Metropolitan	60.8%	Figure 1, Most Common Dementia Risk Factors (%) <table><tr><th>Risk Factor</th><th>Prevalence (%)</th></tr><tr><td>Weight</td><td>60.8</td></tr><tr><td>Hearing</td><td>43.5</td></tr><tr><td>Social</td><td>43.5</td></tr><tr><td>Mood</td><td>20.0</td></tr><tr><td>Smoking</td><td>1.3</td></tr></table> Modifiable dementia risk factors were highly prevalent even among individuals interested in brain health. Lower dementia literacy (CAAASI-Dem; p<.001) and less confidence in changing lifestyle and health for risk reduction (MCLHB-DRR) (p<.001) were associated with higher cumulative risk.	Risk Factor	Prevalence (%)	Weight	60.8	Hearing	43.5	Social	43.5	Mood	20.0	Smoking	1.3	Findings suggest an intention–action gap and support interventions that strengthen dementia literacy while addressing practical barriers to behaviour change. 1. Smith, B.J., S. Ali, and H. Quach, <i>The motivation and actions of Australians concerning brain health and dementia risk reduction</i>. Health Promot J Austr, 2015. 26(2): p. 115-21. Helen Macpherson Bridging Brain Science & Digital Health Associat... A/Prof Helen Macpherson Helen.macpherson@deakin.edu.au
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