

# TransCare

FOURTH EDITION 2021



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Welcome to the Fourth edition of TransCare for 2021

# Principal Officer's note

✓ Petrus Wassermann Principal Officer



Welcome to the fourth edition of TransCare for 2021. As this is our last edition for 2021, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you and your family a healthy and prosperous 2022. Travel safely, be sun smart, keep hydrated by drinking lots of water and please don't drink and drive.

In summer, being cautious of sunburn is very important. Read more about it in 'Say yes to sun protection and no to skin cancer'. In this edition's health article, we discuss dementia: the loss of cognitive functioning – thinking, remembering and reasoning – to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Read more about it in 'Dementia'.

The Transmed Trustee election has been completed and we are very happy to announce the results of the member election, as well as the appointment of the employer and trade union representatives to the Board of Trustees. The names of the elected and appointed Trustees are indicated in this edition. The Trustees play a pivotal role in the management of the Fund and we wish them every success in their new positions.

I sincerely hope that you enjoy the newsletter and, should you wish to give us feedback, please do not hesitate to do so by sending an email to:suggestions@transmed.co.za.

Warm regards

Petrus Wassermann Principal Officer



Thank you to the members who participated in the nomination and election process earlier in the year.

Transmed Medical Fund is governed by a group of people that are known as Trustees, some of whom are elected by members and others appointed by the employer groups and trade unions. Together these representatives make up the Board of Trustees.



The Board of Trustees is led by the Chairperson of the Board. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance and management of the affairs of Transmed Medical Fund. As part of its duties and responsibilities, the Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the Fund is financially and administratively sound, complies with relevant legislation and conforms to the principles of good corporate conduct and practices.

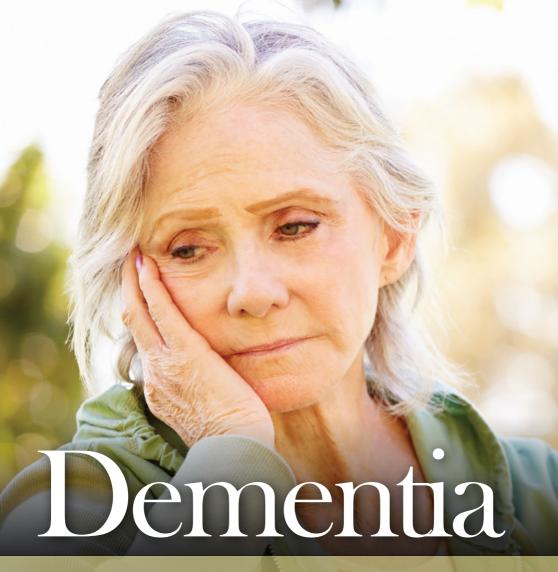
## The composition of the Board is as follows:

#### **MEMBER-ELECTED TRUSTEES**

- Mr C Beard
- Ms S Booysen
- MrT Campher
- MrW Goosen
- Mr B Jonker Vice-Chairperson
- Mr F Mahaso

#### EMPLOYER AND TRADE UNION-APPOINTED TRUSTEES

- Mr H Fourie
- Mr F Mackenzie Chairperson
- Mr | Mamabolo
- Mr L Siwani
- · Mr V Ramlugaan



# What is dementia?

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning – thinking, remembering and reasoning – to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. Though dementia mostly affects older adults, it is not a part of normal ageing.

#### Symptoms

Dementia symptoms vary depending on the cause, but common signs and symptoms include:

#### Cognitive changes

- Memory loss, which is usually noticed by someone else
- Difficulty communicating or finding words
- Difficulty with visual and spatial abilities, such as getting lost while driving
- · Difficulty reasoning or problem-solving
- · Difficulty handling complex tasks
- Difficulty with planning and organising
- Difficulty with coordination and motor functions
- Confusion and disorientation.

#### Psychological changes

- · Personality changes
- Depression
- Anxiety
- · Inappropriate behaviour
- Paranoia
- Agitation
- Hallucinations

#### Causes

Dementia is caused by damage to or loss of nerve cells and their connections in the brain. Depending on the area of the brain that's damaged, dementia can affect people differently and cause different symptoms.

Dementias are often grouped by what they have in common, such as the protein or proteins deposited in the brain or the part of the brain that's affected. Some diseases look like dementias, such as those caused by a reaction to medication or vitamin deficiencies, and they might improve with treatment.

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## Progressive dementias

Types of dementias that progress and aren't reversible include:

 Alzheimer's disease. This is the most common form of dementia. It is caused by changes in the brain, including abnormal build-up of protein, known as amyloid plaques and tau tangles.

 Vascular dementia. This type of dementia is caused by damage to the vessels that supply blood to your brain. Blood vessel problems can cause strokes or affect the brain in other ways, such as by damaging the fibres in the white matter of the brain. The most common signs of vascular dementia include difficulties with problem-solving, slowed thinking and loss of focus and organisation. These tend to be more noticeable than memory loss.

 Lewy body dementia. Lewy bodies are abnormal, balloon-like clumps of protein that have been found in the brains of people with Lewy body dementia, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. This is one of the more common types of progressive dementia. Common signs and symptoms include acting out one's dreams in sleep, seeing things that aren't there (visual hallucinations) and problems with focus and attention. Other signs include uncoordinated or slow movement, tremors and rigidity (parkinsonism).

 Frontotemporal dementia. This is a group of diseases characterised by the breakdown of nerve cells and their connections in the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain. These are the areas generally associated with personality, behaviour and language. Common symptoms affect behaviour, personality, thinking, judgment, language and movement.

 Mixed dementia. Autopsy studies of the brains of people who are 80 and older who had dementia indicate that many had a combination of several causes, such as Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and Lewy body dementia. Studies are ongoing to determine how having mixed dementia affects symptoms and treatment.

#### Risk factors

Many factors can eventually contribute to dementia. Some factors, such as age, can't be changed. Others can be addressed to reduce your risk.

#### Risk factors that can't be changed

 Age. The risk rises as you age, especially after age 65. However, dementia isn't a normal part of ageing and dementia can occur in younger people.

 Family history. Having a family history of dementia puts you at greater risk of developing the condition. However, many people with a family history never develop symptoms and many people without a family history do. There are tests to determine whether you have certain genetic mutations.

#### Risk factors you can change

You might be able to control the following risk factors for dementia.

- Diet and exercise: Research shows that lack
  of exercise increases the risk of dementia
  and, while no specific diet is known to
  reduce dementia risk, research indicates a
  greater incidence of dementia in people
  who follow an unhealthy diet compared
  with those who follow a diet rich in
  produce, whole grains, nuts and seeds.
- Excessive alcohol use: Drinking large amounts of alcohol has long been known to cause brain changes. Several large studies and reviews found that alcohol-use disorders were linked to an increased risk of dementia, particularly early-onset dementia.
- Cardiovascular risk factors: These include high blood pressure (hypertension), high cholesterol, build-up of fats in your artery walls (atherosclerosis) and obesity.

- Depression: Although not yet wellunderstood, late-life depression might indicate the development of dementia.
- Diabetes: Having diabetes may increase your risk of dementia, especially if it's poorly controlled.
- Smoking: Smoking might increase your risk of developing dementia and blood vessel diseases.
- Sleep disturbances: People who have sleep apnoea and other sleep disturbances might be at higher risk of developing dementia.
- Vitamin and nutritional deficiencies: Low levels of vitamin D, vitamin B-6, vitamin B-12 and folate can increase your risk of dementia.

## Complications

Dementia can affect many body systems and, therefore, the ability to function. Dementia can lead to:

- Poor nutrition: Many people with dementia eventually reduce or stop eating, affecting their nutrient intake. Ultimately, they may be unable to chew and swallow.
- Pneumonia: Difficulty swallowing increases the risk of choking or aspirating food into the lungs, which can block breathing and cause pneumonia.
- Inability to perform self-care tasks: As dementia progresses, it can interfere with bathing, dressing, brushing hair or teeth, using the toilet independently and taking medication as directed.
- Personal safety challenges: Some day-to-day situations can present safety issues for people with dementia, including driving, cooking and walking and living alone.
- Death: Late-stage dementia results in coma and death, often from infection.

### Prevention

There's no sure way to prevent dementia, but there are steps you can take that might help. It might be beneficial to do the following:

- Keep your mind active. Mentally stimulating activities, such as reading, solving puzzles and playing word games, and memory training might delay the onset of dementia and decrease its effects.
- Be physically and socially active. Physical activity and social interaction might delay the onset of dementia and reduce its symptoms.
- Quit smoking. Some studies have shown that smoking in middle age and beyond might increase your risk of dementia and blood vessel conditions. Quitting smoking might reduce your risk and will improve your health.
- Get enough vitamins. Some research suggests that people with low levels of vitamin D in their blood are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. You can get vitamin D through certain foods, supplements and sun exposure.
- Manage cardiovascular risk factors. Treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Lose weight if you're overweight.
- Treat health conditions. Consult your doctor for treatment for depression or anxiety.
- Maintain a healthy diet. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and omega-3 fatty acids, which are commonly found in certain fish and nuts, might promote health and lower your risk of developing dementia. This type of diet also improves cardiovascular health, which may help lower dementia risk.
- Get good-quality sleep. Practise good sleep hygiene and talk to your doctor if you snore loudly or have periods where you stop breathing or gasp during sleep.
- Treat hearing problems. People with hearing loss have a greater chance of developing cognitive decline. Early treatment of hearing loss, such as use of hearing aids, might help decrease the risk.

Source: https://www.mayoclinic.org/ diseases-conditions/dementia/symptomscauses/syc-20352013



Say yes to sun protection and no to skin cancer

As we enjoy the lovely, hot summer weather, we should remember that the ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun may be harmful to our skin. Skin cancer is the greatest health risk related to overexposure to UV radiation.



No matter your age, it is very important to take precautions against the sun.

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the major cause of skin cancer. UV damage also causes sunburn, tanning, premature ageing and eye damage. The good news is you can prevent damage – and skin cancer – by being sun smart.

# HOW TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM THE SUN'S HARMFUL UV RAYS AND LOWER YOUR RISK:

- Avoid direct sunlight between 10:00 and 15:00 when the sun's rays are most dangerous.
- Cover up by wearing thickly woven hats with wide brims and loose-fitting clothes made of tightly woven fabric that is cool, but will block out harmful UV rays.
- Always apply sunscreen, preferably with a sun protection factor (SPF) of between 20 and 50 – preferably SPF 30 to 50 for fair to very fair skin. Apply the sunscreen generously to all exposed skin areas.
- Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside into the sun. Re-apply regularly (at least every two hours) after towel-drying, perspiring or swimming.
- Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses with a UV protection rating of UV 400.

# It is important to be and stay sun smart.



- Wash your hands often. Washing your hands helps prevent the spread of germs.
- Wear your face mask. Wearing a face mask not only protects you but others too.
- Manage stress. Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out, overwhelmed and out of control. Some of the best ways to manage stress are to find support, connect socially and get plenty of sleep.
- Be smoke-free. Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke. Smokers have greater health risks because of their tobacco use, but non-smokers are also at risk when exposed to tobacco smoke.
- Prepare food safely. Remember these simple steps: Wash hands and surfaces often, avoid crosscontamination, cook foods to proper temperatures and refrigerate foods promptly.
- Eat healthily and stay active.
   Eat fruits and vegetables that pack nutrients and help lower the risk for certain diseases. Limit your portion sizes and foods high in fat, salt and sugar.
- Don't drink and drive or let others drink and drive. Driving under the influence puts everyone on the road at risk. Choose not to drink and drive and help others to do the same.
- Fasten seat belts
   while driving or
   riding in a motor vehicle. Buckle up
   every time, no matter how short
   the trip and encourage passengers
   to do the same.





Customer service department (general queries)	0800   10 268
Chronic medication application	0800 122 263
Hospital and major medical pre-authorisation	0800 225 151
Optical services (PPN)	0861 103 529
Dental services (DENIS)	0860 104 941
HIV/AIDS	0860 109 793
Ambulance authorisation	0800 115 750
Fraud hotline	0800 000 436
WhatsApp	0860 005 037

Services	Email address
Enquiries	enquiries@transmed.co.za
Banking details and membership	membership@transmed.co.za
Compliments	compliments@transmed.co.za
Complaints	complaints@transmed.co.za
Appeals	appeals@transmed.co.za
Claims	claims@transmed.co.za
Ex gratia	exgratia@transmed.co.za
Suggestions	suggestions@transmed.co.za

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