

A worrying indicator

EXCLUSIVE
IAN ROYALL

ANXIETY symptoms in middle-aged adults may be an indicator of early stages of Alzheimer's disease, new research shows.

Higher anxiety was found to be related to poor attention and memory, the study by Monash University's Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health found.

The study examined the link between symptoms of depression and anxiety to memory and thinking in 2657 adults

Anxiety symptoms linked to Alzheimer's

aged between 40 and 70. Researcher Yen Ying Lim said higher levels of anxiety were related to the person's poorer attention spans and memory retention.

"The observation that anxiety symptoms are related to poorer memory, particularly in late-middle-aged adults, suggests that anxiety may also be an indicator of the earliest stage of Alzheimer's disease, or that it may be related to the development of dementia in

some way," Associate Professor Lim said.

Little was still known about the causes and impact of Alzheimer's disease, she told the Herald Sun.

Alzheimer's, a degenerative brain disease, is considered the most common cause of dementia. It is estimated that 472,000 Australians are living with dementia this year.

But it is feared that number could rise to 1.1 million by 2058 without a breakthrough in

treatment, according to Dementia Australia.

Age and family history have been identified as the main risk factors linked to developing dementia. Until now the only way to lower those risk factors has been by better body and mind health, such as being mentally active.

Prof Lim said the findings, co-authored by researcher Stephanie Perin and published in the Journal of Affective Disorders, suggest that recognis-

ing and dealing with anxiety symptoms as early as possible in midlife could help lower a person's risk of developing dementia.

"Screening for these symptoms may be a means of identifying people experiencing, or at risk of, cognitive decline," she said.

"Anxiety might be related but that doesn't mean it's going to be Alzheimer's, but it's certainly something important to look at. Alzheimer's is complex

and there are many things that can contribute to it.

"More research is needed to understand exactly what is happening in the brain that links depression and anxiety symptoms to cognitive decline and ultimately, the development of dementia."

Another study to further test the results and to see if improving mood can prevent a decline in memory is to be conducted through a BetterBrains clinical trial.

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One-punch alert to all schoolies

SUZAN DELIBASIC

AN emotional video raising awareness about one-punch attacks has been released as young teens gear up for schoolies.

The harm prevention video by STOP. One Punch Can Kill reveals the devastating impacts of street and social violence.

The video features confronting stories that show how easily one single act of violence can destroy lives forever.

The organisation's founder Caterina Politi, who is featured in the video, reveals the tragic story of her son David Cassai, who was killed on New Year's Eve in 2012, when punched in an unprovoked attack.

Ms Politi said after this year's lockdown many young people heading to schoolies might not have experienced going out socialising and she feared this, combined with drugs and alcohol, could end with tragedy.

"As schoolies head out to celebrate and people attend end-of-year festivities, remember that all it takes is one reckless decision or reaction to destroy lives," she said.

The organisation has worked closely with educators on the video so that it can be used in schools, sporting clubs and youth programs.

Ms Politi said: "Our aim is to encourage open and honest conversations about violence, one-punch assaults, drugs and alcohol, mental health and the importance of checking in on your mates."



Devo the whippet puts his best foot forward at Maribyrnong Park Bowls Club, which will host a Victorian Dog Rescue fundraiser. Picture: David Caird

BOWLED OVER BY FUNDRAISER

IN the freedom of eased restrictions, the dog days are hopefully over for the Victorian Dog Rescue.

For the first time in two years, the dog foster care network will hold a live fundraising event - this time, in the form of a bowls and trivia night.

Volunteer and foster carer Karen Godfrey said they were thrilled to be holding a face-to-face event.

"It's been a tricky two years for everyone and we can't wait to get the community together to raise the necessary funds for the animals," Ms Godfrey said.

The rescue prides itself on its "no expense spared" approach.

"The fundraiser will offer something for everyone - there are lots of chances to win prizes and

everyone will go home with a goodie bag."

The event is taking place at the Maribyrnong Park Bowls Club and will offer a myriad of activities, including raffles, games, live music and a silent auction.

Bookings can be made at victoriandogrescue.org.au. GRACE BALDWIN

Security paper to thwart theft

IDENTITY theft will be thwarted with new state-of-the-art security paper printed in Melbourne.

The paper, which will be used on all 400,000 certificates issued by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria each year, will also be used in Australian passports and banknotes.

Previously, the specialised certificate paper was produced

in the United Kingdom but it is now manufactured locally at Note Printing Australia's Craigieburn facility.

It will boast both visible and hidden security features that prevent fraudulent copying and make any attempted tampering easily detectable.

An estimated 25 per cent of Australians have fallen victim to identity crime, costing billions of dollars each year and

causing significant financial and personal impacts that can often take years to recover from.

The new paper includes a multi-tonal watermark, intricate and multi-coloured print elements - including micro-text, UV fluorescent and see-through elements - and a unique serial number for every certificate.

MITCH CLARKE



Boris Johnson.

Boris' gone bonkers?

LONDON: Boris Johnson rejected calls to consult an "inner cabinet" of senior ministers before making key decisions as he denied losing his grip on the government.

The British Prime Minister has faced a backlash from his ministers after a chaotic speech to business chiefs in which he praised cartoon character Peppa Pig. Colleagues concerned

about his mental health said the PM should hold daily meetings with senior colleagues to help him make well-informed decisions. Downing St rejected the proposal and denied Mr Johnson was unwell.

On Monday he lost his place for 20 seconds as he spoke to business people at the Port of Tyne, repeatedly saying "forgive me".