There are over 50 million people living with dementia globally predicted to increase to 152 million by 2050.

Dementia is more common after the age of 65. It is mostly demographically induced and with a lack of causal pharmacological therapies, preventive approaches are gaining in importance.

Almost 62% of healthcare providers worldwide think that dementia is part of normal ageing. 40% of the general public think doctors and nurses ignore people with dementia.

It is important to identify the factors that may delay the onset, slow the progression, or prevent cognitive decline. Physical and intellectual activity and social engagement being the most helpful.

Material & Methods

• Descriptive statistical methods were used for data analysis for Dementia F00-F03 (ICD 10) diagnosed by General/Family Medicine teams from Croatian Health Service Yearbook, 1995-2018, according to the Croatian National Institute of Public Health.

Results

• In the observed period in Croatia, the prevalence of dementia had an increasing trend.
• In 2012 the rate was highest, 290/100,000 (12,444 patients) and lowest in 1996, 132/100,000 (5,858 patients).
• The average annual percent change (AEPC) was 3.4%. The overall increase in the prevalence rate, compared to the beginning of the observed period, was 91%.
• At the beginning of the observed period, one family medicine team cared for 3 patients with dementia, and at the end for 5 patients.
• In 20-64 age group rate ranged from 24-69/100,000; median 40/100,000; AAPC decreasing by -3.7%.
• In 65+ age group rate ranged from 611-1,524/100,000; median 1,253/100,000; AAPC increasing by 4.1

Conclusion

• In the observed period in Croatia, dementia prevalence had an increasing trend.
• There is a need to increase the public health awareness of dementia and improve the quality of health care, social care and long-term care support and services for people living with dementia and their families.
• Public health awareness campaigns for the elderly should include the promotion of physical activity, social connection, cognitive training, proper diet and management of cardiovascular risk factors.
• Early detection and better patient registration could be beneficial in shaping health policy and for the future development of dementia care.