

## Home and Overseas Paper - March 2022

### Introduction

The Central Committee held in 2021 decided to donate £500 to Dementia Research, this is the final Project from that meeting to be covered in a Home and Overseas paper. Often, the projects which are suggested to Central Committee for consideration are causes which are close to our member's hearts. I doubt that there is anybody reading this who has not had some personal experience of dementia – either amongst our own families, friends or church family.

### What is Dementia?

Dementia is a term used to describe a variety of progressive disorders which affect the nerve cells in the brain. Damage to these cells affects the messages sent to and from the brain and stops the body from functioning normally.

The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer's Disease (60%) followed by vascular dementia (17%) but there are over 200 types of dementia. There are about 900,000 people living with dementia in the UK and it is thought that this will rise to over one million by 2025. Young onset dementia (under age of 65) currently affects 42,000 people in the UK.

**Symptoms** are initially mild but become more severe as time goes on and include the list below:

Difficulty remembering recent events while having a good memory for past events

Poor concentration

Difficulty recognising people or objects

Poor organisation skills

Confusion

Disorientation

Slow, muddled or repetitive speech

Withdrawal from family and friends

Problems with decision making, problem solving, planning and sequencing tasks

### What causes Dementia?

Alzheimer's Disease is caused by a build up of proteins in the brain which damage the ability of the brain to send messages.

Vascular dementia is caused by difficulties with the blood supply to the brain and commonly follows strokes or transient ischaemic attacks (TIAs or mini-strokes).

### Can Dementia be cured?

No, it cannot. There are medications available which can slow the progress of Alzheimer's Disease.

The money MWA donated has gone to research into finding a cure for this devastating disease.

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### What else can be done?

We can help people live with the disease so that the quality of their lives and the quality of the lives of the people who care for people with dementia is kept as high as possible.

An initiative by the Alzheimer's Society called dementia friends is aimed at improving knowledge of the condition, how it affects the individuals living with it and how we can all help. The initiative is called Dementia Friends – perhaps you could get involved as an MWA Circle or as a congregation.

For more information visit: [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk).

In my role as a member of the Provincial Mission and Society Committee, I hope to provide some information on how congregations can become Dementia Friendly and encourage congregations to take this up.

Yours in Christ

Sr Janet Cooper