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Review of the Epidemiology of Alzheimer's Disease

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Aim. A brief review of the epidemiology of Alzheimer's disease.

Methods. Survey of the current literature on the epidemiology of Alzheimer's disease, including etiology, as well as a report on the selected ongoing research.

Results. Although improved estimates of prevalence and incidence rates for Alzheimer's disease are available, at present, the number of definite risk factors is quite small. However, the identification of the genetic marker APOE e4 has provided some encouragement that new etiological factors can be found. Also, there is an increased recent interest in potential protective factors such as antioxidant and anti-inflammatory drugs.

Conclusion. The initiation of new epidemiological studies and clinical trials investigating these risk and protective factors and using clinical and structural end points, especially derived from neuropathological specimens, could be an important strategy in clarifying the etiology of Alzheimer's disease and in leading to potential preventive or curative strategies.

Key words: *aging; Alzheimer's disease; risk*

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