

Don't worry, take action – new dementia research by National Seniors Australia

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Older people who believe their activities will help prevent dementia tend to worry less about developing it, according to [a new research report](#) in time for Dementia Action Week (16 – 22 September) by National Seniors Australia.

The research was based on a 2024 survey of around 5000 Australians aged 50 or older. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) worried to some extent about developing dementia.

Around 1200 accepted the option to comment on their worry level. Comments mentioning preventative activities were much more common among those who did not worry or only worried a little than among those who worried somewhat or a lot.

“People mentioned all kinds of activities they felt were preventative, from doing crosswords to physical exercise to social engagement and more,” said National Seniors Head of Research, Dr Diane Hosking.

“Some people’s chosen activities won’t necessarily reduce their risk, but many of them will as dementia research has shown.”

The research showed people who had personal experience with dementia via family members or friends were more likely to worry about it.

At the same time, those who worried were three times more likely than non-worriers to plan for the possibility of a future with dementia, and more likely to seek dementia-related information. Personal experience of dementia was similarly associated with planning and information-seeking.

“As the population ages there will be more people with dementia in the community and among people we know,” said Dr Hosking. “We will all need quality, accessible information about dementia to ensure we feel empowered to take appropriate action to plan for a possible future with dementia for ourselves or people we love.”

Relevant to this, National Seniors has released a [companion report](#) this Dementia Action Week which includes older people’s recommendations of resources they found useful.

“The survey showed there are some misconceptions about dementia out there, which is why we need to direct people to reliable sources of information such as Dementia Australia,” Dr Hosking said.

“For example, quite a few commenters were worried about their family history of dementia, when in reality the genetics are complex, lifestyle is important, and a person’s age plays a huge role in their individual risk of developing dementia.

“The more we talk about dementia’s realities as a community, the better we can take action on dementia.”

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