

April 2021

1. A study from the University of Sydney suggests people diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia (FTD) are unable to feel as happy as they once did due to a deterioration of the pleasure system in the brain. Working with data collected from interviews with caregivers, and imaging technology, the researchers were able to conclude that diminished joy is directly associated with atrophy in pleasure-related areas of the brain, and may be one of the first indicators of FTD. FTD is diagnosed more often in younger people, and “happiness loss” may go unrecognised as a symptom of the disease.
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/health/2021-04-13/loss-of-pleasure-linked-to-frontotemporal-dementia/100063100>
2. Researchers have found people with dementia may experience increased levels of pain 16 years before their diagnosis. While it is unlikely pain causes or increases the risk of dementia, it could possibly be an early indicator of the disease. At time of diagnosis, people with dementia report significantly more pain than people without dementia, with pain levels steadily increasing. Further research is required to determine any definite correlation between dementia and pain.
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/dementia-linked-increased-pain-years-before-diagnosis>
3. The “My Dementia Companion” (MDC) tool was recently named the winner of Bentleys Care Factor pitch day at the online ITAC 2021 event. The intuitive tool, which aims to reduce time spent searching for dementia information, contains over 1,000 pieces of practical support information that can be found, personalised and shared with the client and family quickly and easily. The team at MDC are hoping to expand to a subscription-based model for aged care providers, which will enable the company to provide the service to carers for free.
<https://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/noticeboard/notice-awards/dementia-tool-wins-carefactor/>
4. A National Ageing Research Institute study has received \$580'000 in funding to co-design, trial and implement training in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Greek and Italian. The MINDSET study will work with interpreters, clinicians, CALD people with dementia and their carers to improve dementia skills and knowledge amongst interpreters. As the need for cognitive

assessment increases, so does the need for skilled interpreters who understand and can relay assessment results to people who do not speak English.

<https://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/clinical/dementia/project-funded-580m-to-develop-dementia-training-for-interpreters/>