

# IMPACT OF ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS ON WOMEN ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

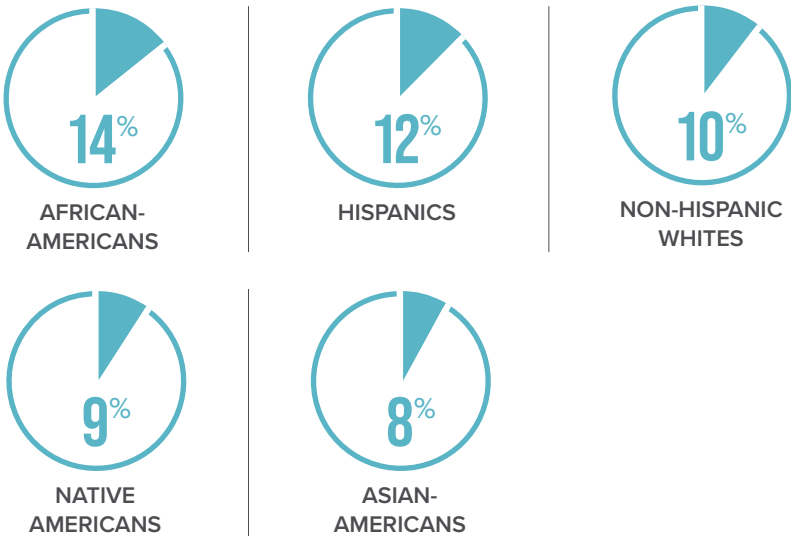
- ➔ **Two-thirds** of the 5.8 million American adults diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease are women.
- ➔ **Women are nearly 2x more likely** to be affected by Alzheimer’s disease than men.
- ➔ **63%** of all unpaid Alzheimer’s disease and dementia caregivers are women.



**Alzheimer’s disease is the most common cause of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other cognitive abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life.**

Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (AD/ADRD) disproportionately affect minority populations, particularly women of color. Differences in the risk of dementia between men and women depend on age and geographic region. In the United States, west and southeast regions are expected to experience the largest percentage increases in people with AD/ADRD between 2020 and 2025.

## Percentage of Adults Aged 65 and Older with Alzheimer’s Disease by Race and Ethnicity (CDC)



African-Americans are 2x more likely and Hispanics 1.5x more likely to be clinically diagnosed with AD/ADRD compared to non-Hispanic white populations. When stratified by sex, women of these racial groups are at even higher risk of being diagnosed with AD/ADRD compared to men. Emerging evidence suggests that relative to all men and non-Hispanic women aged 65 and older, African-American and Hispanic women have the first and second highest prevalence of AD/ADRD, respectively.

Women have a 30% higher risk of dying from Alzheimer’s disease than men. It is the 5th leading cause of death for women. Non-Hispanic white women have the highest mortality rate from Alzheimer’s disease (29%), followed by non-Hispanic Black women (22%) and Hispanic women (20%). Alzheimer’s disease is thought to begin 20 years or more before symptoms arise with small changes in the brain that are unnoticeable to the person affected.

## WOMEN’S HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE

### Common Symptoms

- Agitation/Frustration
- Changes in mood and personality
- Challenges with problem-solving
- Confusion with time and place
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Memory loss that disrupts daily life

Missed diagnoses of AD/ADRD are more common among older African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics than among older whites.

### Risk Factors

Experts believe that Alzheimer’s disease, like other common chronic diseases, develops as a result of multiple factors rather than a single cause.

### AGE AND FAMILY HISTORY

Older age is the greatest risk factor for late-onset Alzheimer’s disease. Individuals who have a parent or sibling with Alzheimer’s dementia are more likely to develop the disease than those who do not.

### CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Many factors that increase the risk of cardiovascular disease are also associated with a higher risk of dementia including smoking and diabetes.

Barriers to Care/Access

- Bias
- Cultural competency of clinicians
- Health literacy
- Lack of trust in health care
- Language
- Technology (Digital and Generational Divide)
- Uninsured or underinsured



Caregivers

Of the women caring for those with Alzheimer’s disease, **19%** have had to quit work owing to caregiving duties.

In the early stage of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, the main role of a caregiver is support. In later stages of the disease, caregivers focus on preserving quality of life and dignity and providing a greater level of care. Caregivers are at elevated risk for experiencing emotional and physical stress.

Economic Impact

The estimated total health care costs for the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease in 2020 is **\$305 billion**. The cost is expected to increase more than \$1 trillion as the population ages.

An estimated **16.3 million** informal caregivers provide approximately **18.6 billion** hours of unpaid care. When evaluating the cost using replacement costs of care valued at \$13.11 per hour, the estimated value of informal care provided in 2019 was **\$244 billion**.



The Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR) **Women’s Health Equity Initiative** highlights statistics on women’s health in the United States and aims to engage communities on solutions to improve health equity with the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, and several disease states.

Health Equity Roadmap

The roadmap features U.S. data on the disproportionate impact of Alzheimer’s disease, bone health, maternal health, and menopause.

[www.swhr.org/healthequity](http://www.swhr.org/healthequity)



HEALTH EQUITY ROADMAP

This roadmap features U.S. data on the disproportionate impact of four diseases on women’s health based on race and ethnicity, geography, age, and role as a caregiver. SWHR plans to add additional disease states, life stages and issues to this map in the future. Download the fact sheets for more information.

- **Alzheimer’s Disease** Approximately **5.8 million** people in the U.S. have Alzheimer’s disease — **two-thirds** of them are
- **Bone Health** Women account for **80%** of the estimated 10 million Americans with osteoporosis and experience bone loss at an earlier age than men
- **Maternal Health** Black women are **three to four times** more likely to die from childbirth than non-Hispanic white women.
- **Menopause** **34%** of women with menopause symptoms are not diagnosed and do not know they are in the menopause transition, while **20%** of women go 12+ months before it is formally identified by their health care provider.

References

Alzheimer’s Association: 2021 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures  
<https://www.alz.org/media/documents/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: New Estimates of Americans with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Show Racial and Ethnic Disparities, 2018  
<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0920-alzheimers-burden-double-2060.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics: Mortality From Alzheimer’s Disease in the United States: Data for 2000 and 2010  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db116.htm#:~:text=Overall%2C%20women%20had%20a%2030%20percent%20higher%20risk,from%20Alzheimer%E2%80%99s%20disease%2C%20followed%20by%20non-Hispanic%20black%20women>

Royce, S. et. al. Differences in Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Pathology Among African American and Hispanic Women: A Qualitative Literature Review of Biomarker Studies, *Front. Syst. Neurosci.*, 21 July 2021

USAgainstAlzheimer’s: Women Against Alzheimer’s  
<https://www.usagainstalzheimers.org/networks/women>

Additional Resources

Society for Women’s Health Research: Women and Alzheimer’s Disease: The Facts Behind the Headlines, 2017  
<https://swhr.org/women-and-alzheimers-disease-the-facts-behind-the-headlines/>