Beat: Health

Alzheimer cases in the U.S. expected to triple by 2050: study

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USPA News - Cases of Alzheimer`s disease in the United States are expected to triple in the next 40 years as so-called baby boomers are reaching old age, according to a study published Wednesday that suggests there could be close to 14 million sufferers by 2050. There were 4.7 million people with Alzheimer`s disease in the United States in 2010, but baby boomers reaching old age are likely to triple that number by 2050. The results of the study were published on Wednesday in the online issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. "This increase is due to an aging baby boom generation," said Jennifer Weuve, assistant professor of medicine at Rush Institute for Healthy Aging at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. She referred to the large numbers of people who were born in the years immediately after the end of World War II. The researchers analyzed information from 10,802 elderly people who lived in Chicago between 1993 and 2011, and participants were interviewed and assessed for dementia every three years.

The results were combined with U.S. death rates, education and current and future population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. The study found that the total number of people with Alzheimer`s disease is likely to reach 13.8 million by 2050, when about 7 million of those with the disease would be age 85 or older. "These projections anticipate a future with a dramatic increase in the number of people with Alzheimer`s and should compel us to prepare for it," Weuve said. Weuve said the results draw attention to an "urgent need" for more research, treatments and preventive strategies to reduce the effects of the disease. "[The increase] will place a huge burden on society, disabling more people who develop the disease, challenging their caregivers, and straining medical and social safety nets," she said.

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