Editorial

Alzheimer's Disease Patients in the Crosshairs of COVID-19

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In just a few months, COVID-19 (COVID) has transformed our lives: everything about work, education, and interpersonal relations is altered. Among all the changes, increased vulnerability of Alzheimer's disease (AD) patients to death is one of the most striking. Up to 80% of those dying of COVID are in long-term care, translating to the possibility that over a third of mortality are those afflicted with AD [1], since approximately half of those in long-term care have AD [2]. There are numerous reports as to why long-term care patients are particularly susceptible to COVID, with close cohabitation being a major factor. AD's comorbidities further align with COVID's risk factors: diabetes, heart disease, and minority status. Significantly, respiratory issues are common among most late-stage AD patients. The recent finding that risk of death from COVID shares the most important AD susceptibility gene, Apolipoprotein E4, also reinforces the link [3].

All this calls out for careful study to determine the actual numbers of AD patients infected and dying of COVID. Knowledge of the extent and how to protect AD patients is imperative to this vulnerable population and their families.

REFERENCES

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