Facts: Research

One out of ten Ontario seniors is living with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia. By 2020, nearly one quarter of a million seniors in Ontario will be affected.¹

This rising tide of dementia, due to our rapidly aging society, will have dire consequences if it goes unchecked. The total economic impact of dementia is expected to balloon from **5.5 billion** in 2008 to **90 billion** by 2018.²

**Research opens the doors of hope for people living with dementia.** Alzheimer Society researchers, who include some of the brightest minds in Canada and around the world, have shed light on the causes of the disease, treatments that slow its progress and steps you can take to help prevent its onset.

For example:
- Key drugs are now available that help delay the onset and slow the progression of the disease when diagnosed early.
- Research is helping us learn more about risk factors, what people can do to reduce them and ways to enhance the brain's self-healing capacity.
- Researchers are looking into ways to enhance quality of life for people living with the disease and their caregivers.

**Contribution to research**

In 2013, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO) contributed more than $2 million to research, including $1.796 million to the Alzheimer Society Research Program and $200,000 to other research projects in Ontario.

In 2011, ASO also established a Research Advisory Council of researchers, medical experts, Board members and staff to identify current research opportunities and make recommendations for increased funding.

**Alzheimer Society Research Program**

For more than two decades, the Alzheimer Society Research Program (ASRP)—a collaborative effort between the Alzheimer Society of Canada (ASC), its provincial affiliates, partners and donors – has contributed over $30 million to world class Canadian research.

---

² Rising Tide Ontario. Please note this figure is made of total direct costs ($44 billion), unpaid caregiver opportunity cost ($28.2 billion), total indirect costs ($16.7 billion) and monetary economic burden (61.7 billion).
The ASRP p, which receives no government funding, is a national peer-reviewed program supporting biomedical research into the causes and cure for Alzheimer’s disease and quality of life research into social and psychological aspects of the disease, including caregiving, family support and long-term care.

The ASRP has supported hundreds of scientists who have made tremendous contributions to the growth of Alzheimer’s knowledge worldwide. Recently, their work has been particularly influential in the areas of biomarkers, genetics and neuroimaging.

**Tanz Centre for Research in Neurodegenerative Diseases**
In 1991, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and a group of people led by Mark Tanz and Lionel Schipper co-founded the Tanz Centre for Research in Neurodegenerative Diseases. Within five years, the discovery of mutated genes responsible for the most aggressive early-onset form of Alzheimer’s disease cemented the Tanz’s reputation for ground-breaking discovery. The Tanz Centre continues to be renowned for its international leadership in research, education and discovery related to neurodegenerative diseases.

ASO has given a total of $12 million to the Tanz Centre since its launch.

**Although there is currently no cure for Alzheimer’s disease,** researchers hope that within five to seven years, treatments attacking the disease process itself, not just the symptoms, will be available. Current studies are on the brink of:

**Understanding environmental risk factors of the disease.** Researchers want to identify which lifestyle and environmental factors make certain people more likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease. By studying these, researchers will be better able to promote lifestyle changes to reduce these risk factors.

**Developing early diagnostic techniques leading to less brain damage**
Researchers are investigating reliable and non-invasive ways to detect Alzheimer’s disease earlier. Early diagnosis and treatment help reduce the disease’s impact on people and improve quality of life.

**Finding a cure**
When people are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias, they face a long, slow progression through symptoms such as memory loss, mood changes and gradual declines in the ability to talk, read, and write. Changes in the brain eventually cause the body to lose all functions. A cure is possible only with more investment in research.

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO) has a vision: a world without Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. With a network of 30 Chapters across Ontario, we offer **Help for Today** through our programs and services for people living with dementia and **Hope for Tomorrow**...® by funding research to find the cause and the cure.