Addressing the polices on Alzheimer dementia

What is the issue?

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- Certain estimates indicate there are over four million affected by dementia in India.
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- India lacks a plan for looking after those stricken by Alzheimer’s dementia.
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What is Alzheimer’s dementia?

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- Alzheimer’s disease accounts for 60 to 80 per cent of dementia cases.
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- It is a progressive, degenerative brain disease affecting a person’s memory, thinking, and the ability to interact socially.
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- There is yet no cure for it and scientists are still searching for cause of this disease which affects about one in 10 people over the age of 65 and almost one in four over 85 years.
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- People under the age of 65 years also are prone to the disease which is known as early onset of Alzheimer’s.
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- Current treatments merely address the symptoms and not the underlying biological cause of the disease.
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What are WHO’s Plan on this disease?

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- The World Health Organisation (WHO) global plan on dementia was adopted

at the 70th World Health Assembly.
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- It calls on governments to meet targets for the advancement of dementia awareness, risk reduction, diagnosis, care and treatment, support for care partners and research.
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- Only 29 out of 194 WHO member countries have a plan of action on dementia, with India not having taken the initiative yet.
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- It calls for an urgent need to include dementia as a national health and social priority with provisions to identify dementia as early as possible.
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What is the status of India’s action on dementia patients?

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- As per the India Dementia Report 2010 about Rs 43,000 annually per family is spent to take care of a person affected by dementia, the cost is high for many.
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- As the ageing population is rapidly increasing, the economic and social burden of the disease is going to rise in the coming years.
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- In India, Alzheimer’s and Related Disorders Society of India (ARDSI) calls for the government to have its plan or policy on dementia which must be implemented in all states and funded and monitored by the health ministry.
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- ARDSI has been successful at initiating a Kerala State Initiative on Dementia which is the first public-private partnership for dementia care and awareness.
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- Kerala has the highest proportion of older persons in the country.
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- It is also a state where many young people migrate leaving older parents behind to fend for themselves.
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- Residential care centres for dementia-affected people are limited.
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What are the area India needs to concentrate?

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- Legal provisions to safeguard and protect the rights, dignity and respect of those affected and in minimising economic costs is the core area India need to address.
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- It is pertinent for India that the framework provided by the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is monitored with regard to guaranteeing the rights of people with dementia.
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- An important aspect of action in dealing with dementia is to work towards risk reduction of the disease.
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- The non-communicable diseases plan of action should include building resources for strengthening brain health by associating it with physical and spiritual health.
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- Training of care givers and initiatives for research on the disease, is the need of the hour.
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- Economic components for facing the various aspects of the disease need to be integrated.
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- Support from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment becomes crucial in India as the disease has many social aspects which need awareness and service facilities at the community level.
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Source: Indian Express

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