**By NICK McDERMOTT, Health Editor**

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Dementia patients in poor areas are 27% less likely to get help

**Rich ‘better at navigating health system’**

**DEMENTIA patients in England’s poorest areas are 27 per cent less likely to get medical help than those in richer places.**

A study found they face a “postcode lottery” on whether they get key drugs.

Researchers at University College London studied anonymous medical records of 77,000 patients.

They found stark differences in the numbers getting prescriptions for cholinesterase inhibitors and memantine, the drugs recommended for Alzheimer’s by NHS watchdog Nice.

Both improve the symptoms of the disease, though there is no cure yet.

The study found the rich-poor divide was unique to England.

Patients elsewhere in the UK enjoy better access to the drugs.

Lead researcher Dr Claudia Cooper said richer people may be better at demanding care from their GP.

She said they “tend to be better-equipped to navigate the healthcare system and get around the restrictions”. Dementia affects 850,000 in the UK.

George McNamara, head of policy at the Alzheimer’s Society, said access to medication should be the same in all areas of the country.