**PUBLIC RELEASE: 12-DEC-2016**

Would you take a free predictive test for Alzheimer's disease?

BIOMED CENTRAL

Three-quarters of people aged 65 and over in the US would take a test telling them they were going to develop Alzheimer's disease if such a test existed, according to research published in the open access journal *Alzheimer's Research and Therapy*.

When asked what they would do if they were told they were definitely going to develop Alzheimer's, 87% of the study participants said they would discuss health plans with loved ones and 81% indicated they would make plans for their future care and/or make a living will, even though only 15% reported that they had already done so.

Dr Meera Sheffrin, lead author from Stanford University School of Medicine in the US, said: "Our research confirms that there is a high level of public interest in predictive tests for Alzheimer's disease. This could be because Alzheimer's is often in the media and perceived as a particularly devastating disease. This interest, and the potential high demand for predictive testing, should be considered as these tests become available, so recourses are available to help counsel patients and prepare for the future."

The researchers analyzed the results of 875 people aged 65 and older (belonging to the Health and Retirement Study), and asked them the hypothetical question whether they would take a free and 100% accurate test to predict their future risk of Alzheimer's disease. Participants were then asked to rate their likelihood of completing advance care planning or a living-will if they knew they would develop Alzheimer's.

Participants' responses to the question were examined based on demographics and self-reported characteristics such as physical functioning, memory, health and risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Dr Sheffrin said: "We found that interest in a predictive test for Alzheimer's disease testing was similar amongst the participants regardless of whether or not they perceived themselves as being at high or low risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Unexpectedly, interest did not vary between individuals who were healthy and those suffering from many medical conditions, or by sex, race, functional status or perceived memory."

In the future, a predictive test could provide an opportunity for patients and families to prepare for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and cognitive decline and allow them to make any necessary financial or family arrangements.

###

**Notes to Editors**

1. Desire for Predictive Testing for Alzheimer's Disease and Impact on Advance Care Planning: A Cross-sectional Study Meera Sheffrin, Irena Stijacic Cenzer, Michael A. Steinman *Alzheimer's Research & Therapy* 2016

During the embargo period, please contact Alanna Orpen for a copy of the article.

After the embargo lifts, the article will be available at the journal website here: <https://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13195-016-0223-9>

Please name the journal in any story you write. If you are writing for the web, please link to the article. All articles are available free of charge, according to BioMed Central's open access policy.

2. *Alzheimer's Research & Therapy* is the major forum for translational research into Alzheimer's disease. An international peer-reviewed journal, it publishes open access basic research with a translational focus, as well as clinical trials, research into drug discovery and development, and epidemiologic studies. The journal also provides reviews, viewpoints, commentaries, debates and reports. Although the primary focus is Alzheimer's disease, the scope encompasses translational research into other neurodegenerative diseases.

3. BioMed Central is an STM (Science, Technology and Medicine) publisher which has pioneered the open access publishing model. All peer-reviewed research articles published by BioMed Central are made immediately and freely accessible online, and are licensed to allow redistribution and reuse. BioMed Central is part of Springer Nature, a major new force in scientific, scholarly, professional and educational publishing, created in May 2015 through the combination of Nature Publishing Group, Palgrave Macmillan, Macmillan Education and Springer Science+Business Media. [http://www.biomedcentral.com](http://www.biomedcentral.com/)

**Disclaimer:** AAAS and EurekAlert! are not responsible for the accuracy of news releases posted to EurekAlert! by contributing institutions or for the use of any information through the EurekAlert system.