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PRESS RELEASE

Very promising future therapies for Alzheimer's Disease!

Prevention is recommended as the most appropriate treatment for the dementia epidemic. The effects of Alzheimer's disease double every 5 years after the age of 65. If we could stall the disease's initiation by 5 years through prevention, the number of cases would decrease by 50% in the next generation.

The above were pointed out during a Press Conference, which took place at the Diagnostic & Therapeutic Center of Athens HYGEIA on Thursday February 21st 2008, by the Head of the Neurodegenerative Brain Conditions Department - Memory Clinic of HYGEIA Hospital and Chairman of the Athens Association of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders, Dr. Paraskevi Sakka, who also noted that healthy dieting, no smoking, physical activity and mainly mental exercises constitute the basic means to prevent Alzheimer's disease.

The number of patients with dementia has increased radically during the past decades. The data for the disease's prevalence at the global level together with the increase of life expectancy provide indications for a more than quadruplicating of the number of dementia patients by 2050. What is even more notable is the relevant increase, which is due to low birth rates. The continuously increasing number of dementia cases justifies the term epidemic or rather pandemic.

Speaking about current treatments for Alzheimer's disease, the Head of the IKA A' Hospital Memory Clinic, Mr. Vasilis Vagenas pointed out that "Today we have medicine available, the cholinesterase inhibitors that considerably stall the advancement of Alzheimer's disease and other dementia conditions and control their symptoms. The prompt initiation of therapy is also what we have to keep in mind, while new diagnostic techniques will effectively assist promptly and precise diagnosis, in order to achieve the best possible result".

Mr. N. Robakis (Professor of Neurosciences, Mount Sinai Medical School, New York) from his perspective, presented the newest research data on molecular mechanisms behind the familial and sporadic form of Alzheimer's disease, on which the effort of new therapeutic factors is based. "Neuroscientists, he continued, try to develop substances and specifically vaccines against the b-amylose, that we hope will halt the neurodegenerative process (active and passive immunotherapy)".



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The Memory Clinic of the Diagnostic & Therapeutic Center of Athens HYGEIA, in cooperation with the Athens Association of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders, organises a conference on Saturday 22.02.08 with the subject "New developments in Dementia 2008. ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: From cholinesterase inhibitors to stem cell therapy."

Apart from those mentioned above, many distinguished Greek and foreign speakers will participate. Amongst those, Mr. N. Skarmas, professor of Neurology at New York's Columbia University, will speak about the importance of the traditional healthy Greek diet (Mediterranean Diet in Preventing Dementia) and Dr. R. Matsu, Head of the Pasteur Institute, will speak about stem cells and their prospect in treating neurodegenerative brain diseases.

Finally, Mr. J. Georges, Executive Director of Alzheimer Europe, will emphasize on the social aspect of Dementia and the need to make Alzheimer's disease a priority in Public Health in European Union countries.