

Digital against dementia and cognitive decline, 'memory-saving' project begins

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In Italy, 1.5 million people suffer from dementia, of which 600 thousand from Alzheimer's. Numbers that photograph an increasingly feared socio-health emergency as confirmed by a survey by Senior Italia FederAnziani, according to which 53% of Italians declare that they are very afraid that a form of dementia could affect a dear relative or friend. Not only that, 8 out of ten say they are willing to carry out preventive tests, 65% say that, in case of need, they would also like external help to assist their loved one while more than 57% do not know that there are innovative treatments against pathology in addition to the use of drugs.

For this reason, the 'memory-saving' e-MemoryCare project starts from Rome and Milan, a digital platform designed to 'stimulate' the brain, not only of those with a diagnosis of full-blown dementia. The innovative method currently involves 10,000 people who will receive the treatment free of charge. Sponsored by Senior Italia FederAnziani, Asi – Italian social sports associations and Vitattiva, the project was presented today to the Ministry of Health in the presence of the undersecretaries Marcello Gemmato (Health) and Claudio Barbaro (Environment and energy security). The e-MemoryCare platform uses new IT and web technologies to combat dementia: through four different apps, specific exercises are created to 'train' the brains of people at risk. They are interventions that act on different spheres (mnemonic, cognitive, social, behavioral and relational) with the aim of slowing down the cognitive decline that is at the basis of the various forms of dementia.

The initiative starts in Milan in the health facilities of the Santagostino Medical Center. At the same time, it also starts in Rome and its province in the 23 diagnostic centers of the Artemisia Lab group. In total, 10,000 patients will be involved, equally divided in the two main Italian cities, who will thus be able to access the new treatment free of charge. The method will soon be extended to other cities on the Peninsula while the ememorycare.it portal is already active. Information brochures are distributed and promotional activity is planned on the main social media.

The project makes use of a scientific advisory board – we read in a note – which brings together psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, nutritionists, physiatrists, cardiologists, neuropsychologists and economists. It is supported and promoted by Sin (Italian Society of Neurology), Cnop (National Council of the Order of Psychologists), Sinp (Italian Society of Neuropsychopharmacology), Fimmg (Italian Federation of General Practitioners), Sumai Assoprof (Single Italian outpatient medicine and professionalism union healthcare area) and Fnopi (National Federation of Nursing Professions Orders).

“Italy is one of the oldest countries on the entire planet – underlines Alessandro Padovani, elected president of the Italian Society of Neurology (Sin) and director of the Neurological Clinic and of the School of Specialization in Neurology of the University of Brescia – Dementia is a neurodegenerative disease that can arise between the ages of 40 and 60 but undoubtedly affects older people more. It compromises attention, memory, language, thinking, perception, executive abilities, processing speed, reasoning and learning in a more or less serious way. Cognitive decline is an increasingly widespread condition as the average age of the population constantly increases.” e-MemoryCare provides a user experience tailored to each user.

“We have designed different types of exercises that stimulate the patient’s cognitive, affective, social, behavioral and relational sphere – underlines Marianna Messina, Senior Project Manager Italy Team Leader e-MemoryCare and creator of the method – It is a non-invasive treatment that The aim is first and foremost to put the person at the centre. At the moment there are no therapies capable of definitively solving the increasingly serious problem of cognitive decline. However, we can safeguard the psycho-physical well-being of the elderly also thanks to e-MemoryCare”.

It is an “innovative modality of intervention and can provide excellent results – adds Claudio Mencacci, president of the Italian Society of Neuropsychopharmacology and co-president of the Italian Society of Geriatric Psychiatry – By exploiting the latest technologies it is able to create a direct and profitable contact between patients and doctors. It ensures significant savings for the entire national healthcare system as it

prevents hospitalizations and interventions in hospital facilities. For Alzheimer's alone, hospitalizations and access to social and health services account for 25% of the direct costs of the disease." It can also "concretely and daily support relatives and caregivers in their difficult work of helping – underlines David Lazzari, national president of the Psychologists Association – The most serious forms of dementia, and in particular Alzheimer's disease, create severe inconvenience even for those who are forced to live them indirectly. Material difficulties in everyday life, constant worries, a sense of discomfort and helplessness are very frequent. For this reason, it is essential to also provide caregivers with effective and above all easy-to-use curative treatments."

"In total there are more than 13 million over 65s living in Italy – adds Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life and honorary president of Senior FederAnziani – Men and women who are no longer very young but who still have a good life perspective but also various fragilities. There is therefore a need for greater commitment from everyone to protect the elderly and their health."

The FederAnziani survey "highlights the strong concerns of Italians – claims Niccolò Marchionni, professor emeritus of Internal Medicine and Geriatrics at the University of Florence – There is still a strong social stigma attached to dementia and mental illnesses more generally. And for eight out of ten citizens the State, as well as the Regions and Local Health Authorities, do little or nothing to solve a big problem. All new possible solutions are therefore welcome." "We are very happy with the introduction of this innovative method against cognitive decline. We believe that e-MemoryCare can be of real help to Italian patients and families", conclude Roberto Messina, president of Senior FederAnziani, Fabio Salerno, general director of Asi, and Alfonso Rossi, president of Vitattiva.

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