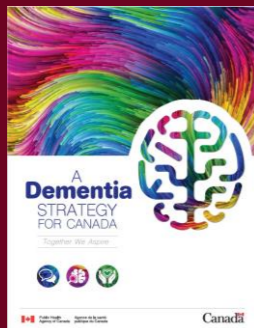


# UNDERSTANDING HOW COMMUNITY DWELLING PERSONS WITH EARLY DEMENTIA PERCEIVE HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES: INFORMING THE DEMENTIA STRATEGY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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## Background and Purpose

- In 2019, the Canadian Federal Government released a dementia strategy (Government of Canada, 2019).
- One of the primary objectives of the strategy was to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia and their caregivers.
- To that end, the Alzheimer Society of NL collaborated with the government of NL to develop the Dementia Care Action Plan 2023–2026 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2023).
- The Dementia Action Plan consists of four foci. One of the four foci was to improve the supports and services that people need to live well with dementia.



The aims of our research were to:

- increase understanding of how persons living at home with early dementia and their caregivers/significant others currently perceive and interact with health and community-based services and service providers.
- inform the Dementia Action Plan 2023-2026.

## Methods

- A qualitative descriptive approach (Sandelowski, 2000) was used to explore the experiences of individuals with early dementia and care providers with health and community-based services using semi-structured interviews and content analysis.

## References

- Published research with references available here



## Results

- Participants included 16 individuals 50 years and older with mild/early dementia living at home, 22 informal caregivers of individuals with mild/early dementia, and 5 key community informants (community health nurses (1) and social workers (4)).
- The number of key informants was low because data collection occurred during COVID-19.
- Four thematic categories of barriers for access to and uptake of supportive services were identified:
  - *I don't know,*
  - *I don't have Alzheimer's disease,*
  - *Not that bad,* and
  - *The healthcare system.*
- Two thematic categories of facilitators were identified:
  - *Healthcare system,* and
  - *The Alzheimer's Society.*
- Five strategies to inform the development of an action plan to enhance access to, and uptake of, supportive services were also identified:
  - *Hiring more healthcare providers,*
  - *Ready-to-hand information,*
  - *Alzheimer's Society-expanding role,*
  - *Increased visibility,* and
  - *Preferential treatment.*

## Conclusion

- Early recognition of dementia through education and publicity enhanced public awareness, attention, and social inclusion with dementia-friendly neighborhoods and facilities are necessary to achieve effective dementia-related services. Inclusion and recognition of the wishes of persons with dementia and their families is key.
- Results of this research were brought to the Advisory Council overseeing the Dementia Care Action Plan.
- An awareness campaign designed to promote dementia-inclusive communities was launched by the government of NL.