Evidence for risk and protective factors for Alzheimer’s disease

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Abstract

This paper will critically evaluate the development of the evidence base for risk and protective factors for Alzheimer's disease. Methodological factors that need to be considered when evaluating evidence will be described. These include study design, measurement of outcomes, understanding the difference between individual risk and population level risk of Alzheimer’s disease, the importance of age of exposure and non-linear relationships between risk factors and AD. The current evidence for demographic, medical, lifestyle, and genetic risk and protective factors for AD will be reviewed, with identification of risk factors for which there is strong evidence. Population level implications of risk reduction will be discussed as a means of population level prevention of Alzheimer’s disease.