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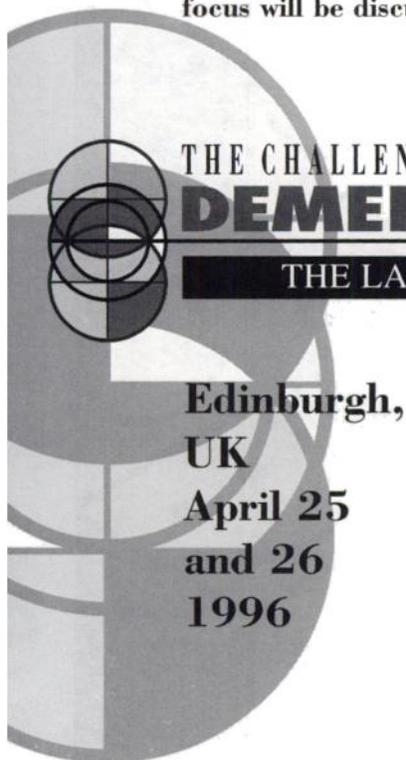
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Call for Abstracts

The Lancet invites abstracts, in the form of posters, for a two day conference on **The Challenge of the Dementias: Towards a Better Understanding of Cognitive Impairment**. Plenary lectures and shorter invited papers will be given at the start of the four sessions, but the focus will be discussion between audience and mixed specialty panels.



The Challenge of the Dementias: Towards a Better Understanding of Cognitive Impairment

The average lifespan in industrialised countries has increased by 50% during the 20th century. One result is more and more neurodegenerative disorders. These evinced little interest when Alois Alzheimer made his

observations, but now we know that they constitute the third leading cause of death in adults.

Recent research into the dementias has led to progress in the areas of classification and outcome but little is known about aetiology or treatment. And where do lesser degrees of cognitive impairment that affect 5–10% of elderly people fit into the picture? This category has had various names, such as 'benign senescent forgetfulness', 'cognitive impairment, no dementia', and most recently 'age-associated cognitive decline'. While the name may change, this represents a fascinating group of disorders of a mixed nature and aetiology.

The main themes for discussion at the conference are incidence, cause, clinical presentation, treatment, and outcome of dementia and cognitive impairment.

- ◆ *Do memory lapses in later life herald dementia or merely signify age-associated cognitive decline?*
- ◆ *How do we define the threshold for diagnosis of dementia and for any future treatment?*
- ◆ *What are the ethical and social issues of genetic testing within the dementia spectrum?*
- ◆ *Are there realistic therapeutic and preventive strategies?*

This conference will explore these issues in a cross-specialty way in four sessions covering epidemiology; genetics and biomarkers; neuroimaging, neuropsychology, and neuropathology; and social, legal, and ethical aspects.

Posters will be displayed throughout the meeting and selected ones will be presented and discussed during the sessions. An investigator prize will be awarded for the best poster presentation.

Finally a writing panel will draw from the conference some messages for research priorities, and that document will appear in *The Lancet*.

Chairman
Robin Eastwood (*Toronto, Canada*)

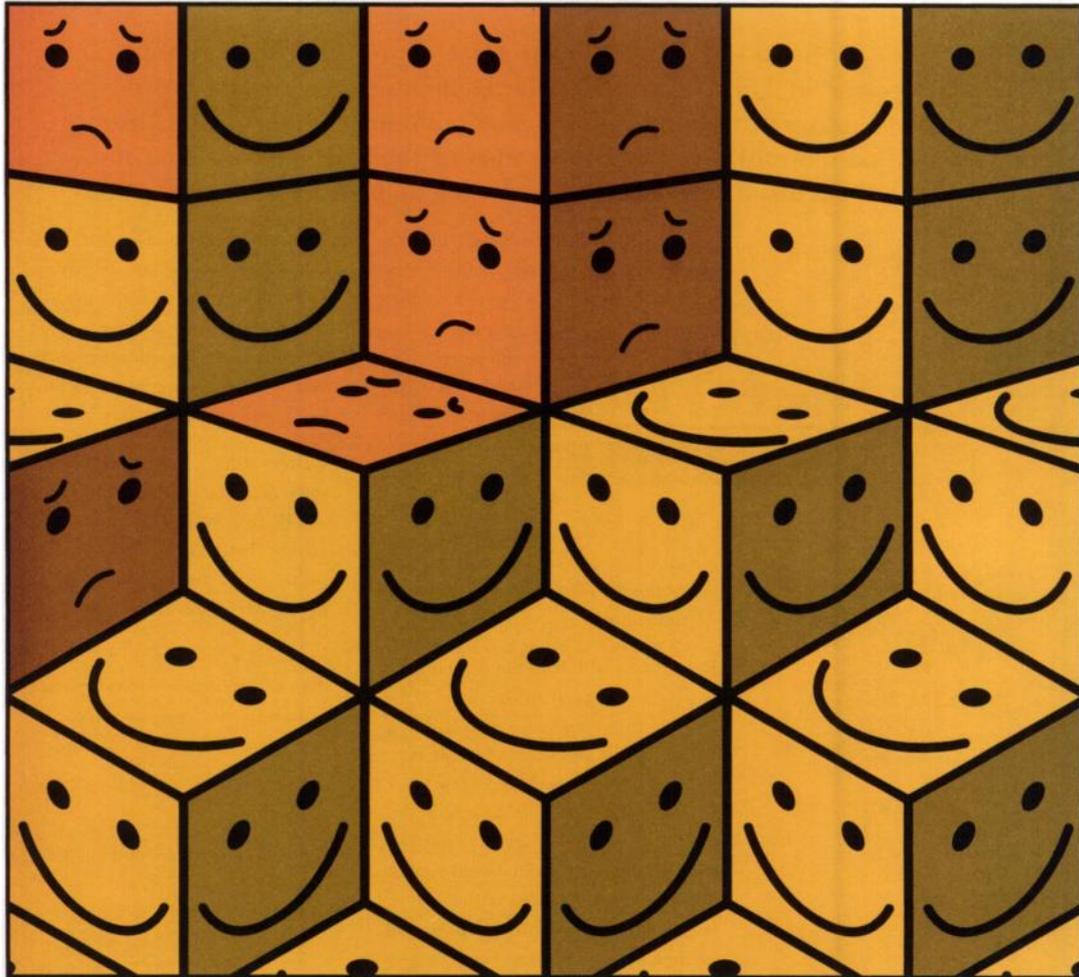
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