

# Israel

Research conducted in 01/11/2025

Healthcare in Israel is universal and dementia diagnosis, including a specialist consultation and a comprehensive geriatric assessment, is largely free in Israel for citizens and permanent residents, owing to the National Health Insurance Law. Israel provides significant monetary assistance for people living with dementia and their families to manage the disease, while also boasting modern healthcare infrastructure and being a leading force globally when it comes to incorporating innovative research and treatments in clinical practice. Israel has a developed non-governmental sector, with a number of organisations specialising in the provision of care and support to people living with dementia, their families and care partners.

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## Highlights

Health system **Universal, mixed funding**

ADI member association(s): **EMDA - Alzheimer's Association of Israel**

National dementia plan: **National Programme for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia (2013)**

Dementia plan funding: **Funded plan**

Dementia prevalence rate: **499**

Dementia incidence rate: **88.5**

Population: **9563714**

Median age: **29**

Health expenditure (% of GDP): **7**

## Diagnosis

Dementia diagnosis in Israel usually begins with a visit to a family physician within one of the national health funds (kupot holim), who performs an initial assessment and may refer the patient to a geriatrician, neurologist, or psychiatrist for further evaluation. Diagnosis typically includes cognitive testing, clinical assessment, and imaging such as MRI, with additional tests used when needed. Core diagnostic services are covered by the national health insurance system, although some advanced tests may require out-of-pocket payment. Access to primary care is generally quick, but waiting times for specialists and imaging can be longer, particularly outside major urban areas.

### Diagnosis pathway

In Israel, dementia diagnosis usually begins with a visit to a family physician within one of the national health funds (kupot holim). The doctor performs an initial assessment to rule out other conditions that may cause cognitive symptoms and may then refer the patient to a geriatrician, neurologist, or psychiatrist for further evaluation. Diagnosis is typically carried out through a multidisciplinary assessment, which may include cognitive testing, clinical evaluation, and imaging such as MRI when needed. Advanced biomarker or genetic testing is available in some specialized centres but is not part of routine clinical diagnosis.

Healthcare in Israel is universal – with all citizens and permanent residents having to enrol in one of four kupot holim, that is, health funds, which provide a standardised and comprehensive basket of services<sup>2</sup>. According to estimates, approximately 154,000 individuals in Israel live with some form of dementia and the figure is expected to rise to around 290,000 by 2030, in tandem with the expected increase in the proportion of the older population . Dementia diagnosis, including a specialist consultation and a comprehensive geriatric assessment, is part of the standardised health basket provided by the kupot holim under the National Health Insurance Law. Despite boasting modern healthcare infrastructure, including a developed network of tertiary clinics specialising in dementia treatment and care , Studies deemed the Israeli mental health system to be “poorly prepared” to face the prospects of a growing population of people living with dementia.

Israel is one of the countries in the Middle East region to have adopted a strategic approach to dementia management. While there is no national early dementia screening programme, a standard diagnostic pathway for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias is available in Israel, with significant efforts to increase its visibility among the broader population. When an individual or their family have concerns about memory loss or cognitive decline, they should first contact their family physician. Family physicians will conduct an initial assessment, aimed at ruling out conditions that cause symptoms similar to dementia – infectious diseases, unbalanced thyroid, vitamin B12 deficit, head injury symptoms, medication side effects, alcohol poisoning, or other addictive substances. Visits to family physicians within the kupot holim clinics are part of the standardised health services basket .

In the following circumstances, individuals could be referred to geriatric, neurological or psychiatric specialists:

- (1) Uncertain diagnosis
- (2) The patient is younger than 60, or their family member was diagnosed with dementia at a young age.
- (3) Treatment of symptoms through dedicated Alzheimer's disease medications is difficult.
- (4) Depression or behavioural disorders – especially if there is no response to treatment.

(5) If a patient needs caregiving assistance, or support with daily activities.

Specialists conduct a multidisciplinary assessment within geriatric assessment units as part of the process leading to a dementia diagnosis. These assessments are conducted by a team composed of specialists from the fields of geriatric medicine, neurology or psychiatry (if necessary) and medical professionals in the field of nursing, social work, radiology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and nutrition. Considering that these assessments are all encompassing, the Israeli Ministry of Health recommends family members or close friends to accompany individuals suspecting dementia to them.

Specialist assessments often include diagnostic imaging. While they are readily available, the prevalence of diagnostic imaging facilities – such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and positron emission tomography (PET) units – is below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) averages. MRI is particularly used in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease, while CT and PET technologies are less commonly used.

The use of genetic tests and advanced biomarkers in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias is an evolving field in Israel – it is not considered to be part of the standard diagnostic pathway. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) analysis and apolipoprotein E (APOE) genotype investigation are available in some specialised centres. These tests are primarily used in research settings (i. e. the Cognitive Neurology Unit at Tel Aviv Medical Centre (TLVMC)). Blood-based biomarkers, such as the Alzheimer's disease detect test, have been used in Israeli clinical settings for research purposes.

If a dementia diagnosis is confirmed, specialists determine a suitable drug therapy for the person, while continuing to support patients through regular check-ups, in order to delay the progress of dementia and mitigate potential behavioural problems<sup>12</sup>. The Israeli Ministry of Health advises people living with dementia to engage in (1) sensory stimulation, (2) cognitive stimulation and (3) physical activity.

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## Wait times

*Status: Short wait time*

In Israel, access to family physicians is generally quick, and many patients use them as their first point of contact. However, waiting times for specialist consultations can be longer, averaging around 15-20 days. Access to diagnostic imaging varies: MRI scans average about one month, while CT scans may take up to two months and PET scans around three months in some regions, with longer waits reported outside major urban areas.

The number of physicians per capita is lower in Israel compared to the OECD average, standing at 3.1 against 3.5 per a thousand people. One study from 2020, found that 64% of Israelis preferred their family physician to be their first point of contact within the healthcare system, while 49% reported turning to their family physician for every aspect of healthcare. While a large number of Israelis relies on family physicians for most healthcare needs, statistics on waiting times for getting an appointment are unavailable. However, these are unlikely to be significant, especially considering that the main kupo holim have worked on developing robust telemedicine pathways to reduce waiting times and the work burden of primary care physicians.

Conversely, waiting times for specialist consultations in Israel are notably long relative to those in other developed countries – for most medical consultations, they range from 15 to 20 days on average (2022). In general, it seems that the issue of long waiting times is also dependent on geographic location, with long waits mainly in the Negev region. Average wait times for adult neurology MRI scans stood at around 32 days in 2019 – but have decreased over the last decade – primarily owing to the success of a multifaceted programme developed by the Israeli Ministry of Health, aimed at shortening waiting times for MRI. The severe shortage of radiologists across Israel remains a challenge, adding a layer of complexity to neuroimaging. For example, CT scan wait times can be up to two months, while wait times for PET scans vary across the country – being around three months in areas where CT scanners are less prevalent.

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- <https://www.friendswgh.org.il/en/2021/10/26/establishing-a-pet-ct-institute>

## Diagnosis cost

*Status: Mostly or fully covered*

The core dementia diagnostic pathway, including family physician visits, specialist consultations, neuropsychological assessments, and baseline MRI imaging, is covered under the national health insurance system through the kupo holim. Some advanced tests, such as PET scans, biomarker analysis, and genetic testing, may require out-of-pocket payment. Many residents also hold supplementary insurance plans, with about 84% enrolled in kupo holim supplementary plans and around 57% in private insurance, which can provide faster access to services or private clinics.

Access to the standardised pathway for diagnosing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, which includes a family physician consultation, a specialist consultation and a geriatric assessment – neuropsychological evaluations and a baseline MRI scan – are provided to all Israeli citizens and permanent residents for free. Most examinations leading to a dementia diagnosis are included in the standardised basket of services provided by the kupo holim, in one of which Israeli citizens and permanent residents must be enrolled. Some non-standard procedures within the diagnostic pathway are paid out-of-pocket – such as PET scans, biomarker analysis (lumbar punctures are fully covered) and genetic testing. Within the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Centre, for instance, a PET scan costs NIS 3,036, while APOE genotyping (for the ε4 allele) would set a person back NIS 525.

A majority of Israelis also purchase supplementary insurance plans – from the kupot holim, commercial insurers or both. Estimates from 2016 show that 84% of the Israeli population were enrolled in kupot holim supplementary plans, while 57% of the population were enrolled in plans offered by commercial insurers<sup>15</sup>. Supplementary insurance plans offer facilitated access to benefits covered by the National Health Insurance standardised basket – providing improved amenities and faster access to care. In addition, those enrolled in supplementary insurance plans benefit from accessing private clinics, in which waiting times tend to be lower.

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## Cognitive tests

*Status: Available*

In Israel, cognitive screening tests that are either used or validated for use include the following:

- (1) Hebrew and Arabic versions of the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE)
- (2) Hebrew and Arabic versions of the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MOCA)
- (3) Brookdale Cognitive Screening Test (BCST)
- (4) Hebrew version of Addenbrooke's Cognitive Examination (ACE – III)
- (5) Hebrew version of Cambridge Cognitive Examination (CAMCOG)
- (6) Kohlman Evaluation of Living Skills (KELS)
- (7) Hebrew version of the Boston Naming Test (BNT)

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- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0093934X04001087>

## Imaging tests

*Status: Commonly used*

Diagnostic imaging services are readily available in Israel – both in the public and private sectors. Yet, compared to countries at similar per capita income levels, Israel ranks rather low in terms of the penetration of diagnostic imaging facilities. Per one million inhabitants, Israel has 10.28 CT units, 6.28 MRI units and 1.96 PET units. Currently, there is a severe shortage of radiologists and nuclear medicine technologists in Israel. Consequently,

radiologists in Israel are in high demand – according to the OECD, radiologists perform significantly more CT, MRI and PET scans per a thousand inhabitants than those in countries with greater diagnostic imaging capacities.

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## Genetic tests

Genetic testing – such as APOE genotype investigation – for the purposes of diagnosing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias is primarily concentrated in research settings. For example, a number of Israeli studies studying the relationship between apolipoprotein E  $\epsilon$ 4 allele frequencies and the onset of Alzheimer's disease have been produced. Genetic testing is used in clinical settings – being available in larger specialised hospitals upon request. But as it is generally not considered to be part of the standard diagnostic pathway for dementia, it is not included in the standardised basket of services covered by the kupot holim.

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## Biomarker tests

*Status: Commonly used*

CSF testing designed to detect  $\beta$ -amyloid and phosphorylated tau (p-tau) protein deposits is commonly used in larger specialised hospitals to diagnose Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Total t-tau, hyperphosphorylated tau (p-tau181), and amyloid- $\beta$  42 (A $\beta$ 42) tests are among those used. Physicians within these institutions generally recommend lumbar punctures to diagnose Alzheimer's disease – as the procedure is fully covered by public insurance, with only the biomarker analysis covered out-of-pocket. Some innovative blood-based biomarkers have also been used in Israeli clinical settings – such as the AD-Detect test – designed to detect  $\beta$ -amyloid and phosphorylated tau (p-tau) proteins.

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## Treatment & care

Dementia care in Israel is provided through a network of hospital-based memory clinics, specialist hospital departments, and community services. Around 19 memory clinics across major medical centres offer diagnosis, treatment planning, and follow-up care, while home care, palliative care, and day care centres support people living with dementia in the community. Most standard Alzheimer's medications are covered through the national health insurance system with small co-payments, while some newer treatments may require out-of-pocket payment or supplementary insurance. Families can also access long-term care support through the National Insurance Institute, alongside guidance, support groups, and educational resources from organisations such as EMDA, Alzheimer's Association of Israel.

### Specialized facilities and services

Dementia care in Israel is supported by a network of around 19 hospital-based memory clinics, usually located within major medical centres, which provide early diagnosis, multidisciplinary assessment, treatment planning, and patient and caregiver support. Prominent centres include Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Centre (Ichilov Hospital), Hadassah Medical Centre, and Rambam Health Care Campus, which offer advanced neurological and memory disorder services. These clinics provide cognitive therapies, medical management, and social support, and coordinate follow-up care. Additional services include home care and palliative care through the national health funds, as well as a nationwide network of day care centres for older adults, many with dedicated dementia programmes.

In Israel healthcare facilities are open to adopting new, cost-effective technologies and procedures. The Israeli Ministry of Health actively monitors the quality of primary care, publishing comparative quality data for institutions affiliated with each of the *kupot holim*. In addition, the Ministry of Health publishes comparative, hospital-specific quality data – the number of quality indicators and of the types of services covered has been growing rapidly in recent years. The *kupot holim* also maintains internal data on regions, clinics and individual physicians – working closely with them to improve the quality of healthcare provision.

Israel established a network of memory clinics – which are usually wards within large hospitals, specialising in the provision of early diagnosis of dementia, comprehensive treatment and care services, as well as education and training for medical professionals in relation to the disease. In memory clinics, patients can benefit from personalized “brain activation plans”, developed in consultation with their physicians. Their goal is to delay and manage the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease as effectively as possible. The therapeutic intervention includes sessions dedicated to teaching strategies for improving memory and integrating them into daily life. People are invited for regular examinations in order to diagnose any changes in their condition, and – in some cases – the clinic also provides them with medications that slow cognitive deficit and can improve quality of life and functioning. Some people also come to the clinic to practice with an occupational therapist, while others use the services of a resident social worker to clarify their rights.

According to the Alzheimer's Association of Israel (EMDA), there are currently 19 memory clinics in the country. Some of the most prominent Israeli memory clinics include:

(1) Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Centre – more widely known as the Ichilov Hospital – is known for being the first medical centre outside the United States that received approval to treat people living with Alzheimer's disease with lecanemab, an innovative treatment targeting amyloid plaques. Its Cognitive Neurological Unit is considered to be one of the most advanced treatment facilities for memory and attention deficit disorders in the world.

(2) Hadassah Medical Centre at Mount Scopus is a private, non-profit hospital located in Jerusalem. It features a modern Neurogeriatric and Memory Clinic, which conducts international and multicentre clinical studies on Alzheimer's disease.

(3) Rambam Health Care Campus is a public, non-profit teaching hospital, located in Haifa. Rambam is known for featuring a Fortified Underground Emergency Hospital, activated for use during times of conflict. In terms of dementia treatment and care, Rambam features a well-known Cognitive Neurology Unit, which is a leader in dementia research in Israel.

Israel recognizes the right of people living with dementia to access palliative care in a variety of strategic documents. Since 2009, the Israeli Ministry of Health mandates institutions to provide palliative care to people living with dementia, while the National Programme for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia (2013) outlines the need for providing home or hospice care to people living with late-stage dementia. In Israel, caring for terminally ill confined to homes is mainly done by home care units, and, in some cases, by home hospice units, which are an alternative palliative care service. Home care for people living with late-stage dementia is provided to all everyone by the kupot holim as part of their basic medical insurance, but this generally does not include specialised end of life care. Home care units usually consist of nurses and physicians who, during planned visits every 3 to 4 months, evaluate the person and treat them as needed. The visits can become more frequent if necessary, up to several times a week, but are generally limited to clinic hours. An alternative, uncommon service is provided by home hospice units, specialising in palliative care for people with an estimated 6 month survival prognosis. This service is generally available, for both planned and urgent home visits, also being provided by the kupot holim as part of the standardised health service basket. Determining eligibility for these services differs across the kupot holim, however.

When it comes to long-term care, Israel features a network of 174 day care centres (2021) for older adults. This service was initially developed and implemented by the Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel (ESHEL). These provide sociocultural activities, personal care services, meals and professional therapeutic services for older adults – all under one roof. Day care centres are part of the basket of services offered to older adults eligible under the Long-Term Care Insurance Law. Day care centres are commonly used by mentally frail elders living in the community, with their families receiving a respite through this service. Almost a third of all day care centres have a special department for the mentally frail people living with dementia or have a separate wing for this population.

## Approved medication

Generic Name	Trade Name	Used for
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<p>Donepezil; Official National Product Information;  <a href="https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum01_17_248744224.pdf">https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum01_17_248744224.pdf</a></p>	<p>Aricept,          Aricept ODT,          Adlarity,          Eranz,          Memac,          Alzepil, Davia,          Donecept,          Donep,          Donepex,          Donesyn,          Dopezil,          Yasnal,          Memorit,          Pezale,          Redumas,          Zolpezil,          Namzaric*</p>	<p>Donepezil is indicated for the symptomatic treatment of mild to moderately severe Alzheimer's dementia.  <a href="#">Official UK medicine details (MHRA SPC) link</a></p>
<p>Rivastigmine; Official National Product Information;  <a href="https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum_19_388729921.pdf">https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum_19_388729921.pdf</a></p>	<p>Exelon,          Exelon Patch,          Prometax,          Rivastach,          Nimvastid</p>	<p>Symptomatic treatment of mild to moderately severe Alzheimer's dementia. Symptomatic treatment of mild to moderately severe dementia in patients with idiopathic Parkinson's disease.  <a href="#">Official UK medicine details (MHRA SPC) link</a></p>

<p>Galantamine; Official National Product Information;  <a href="https://assets.hpra.ie/products/Human/26629/Licence_PA1347-015-003_06102022123210.pdf">https://assets.hpra.ie/products/Human/26629/Licence_PA1347-015-003_06102022123210.pdf</a></p>	<p>Razadyne,  Razadyne ER,  Reminyl,  Reminyl XL,  Nivalin,  Lycoremine,  Galsya</p>	<p>Galantamine is indicated for the symptomatic treatment of mild to moderately severe dementia of the Alzheimer type.  <a href="#">Official UK medicine details (MHRA SPC) link</a></p>
<p>Memantine; Official National Product Information;  <a href="https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum_21_570395021.pdf">https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum_21_570395021.pdf</a></p>	<p>Namenda,  Namenda XR,  Ebixa,  Memaury,  Axura,  Akatinol,  Maruxa,  Nemdatine,  Namzaric*</p>	<p>Treatment of adult patients with moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease.  <a href="#">Official UK medicine details (MHRA SPC) link</a></p>
<p>Donanemab; Official National Product Information;  <a href="https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum01_28_53152626.pdf">https://mohpublic.z6.web.core.windows.net/IsraelDrugs/Rishum01_28_53152626.pdf</a></p>	<p>Kisunla</p>	<p>Donanemab is indicated for the treatment of mild cognitive impairment and mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease (AD) in adult patients that are apolipoprotein Eε4 (ApoE ε4) heterozygotes or non-carriers.  <a href="#">Official UK medicine details (MHRA SPC) link</a></p>

<p>Lecanemab; Official National Product Information; <a href="https://pharmaline.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/LEQEMBI-20.7D.pdf">https://pharmaline.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/LEQEMBI-20.7D.pdf</a></p>	<p>Leqembi</p>	<p>Lecanemab is indicated for the treatment of mild cognitive impairment and mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease in adult patients that are apolipoprotein E ε4 (ApoE ε4) heterozygotes or non-carriers.</p> <p><a href="#">Official UK medicine details (MHRA SPC) link</a></p>
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\*Namzaric = combination of Donepezil and Memantine

\*\* MHRA: Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency - UK medicines regulator;

SPC: Summary of Product Characteristics - detailed product information

### Treatment cost

In Israel, several standard Alzheimer's medications, including donepezil, rivastigmine, and galantamine, are included in the national health services basket and are available with little or no cost through the kupot holim, sometimes requiring a small co-payment. Other treatments, such as memantine and newer therapies like lecanemab, may require out-of-pocket payment or supplementary insurance. Additional financial and care support is provided through the National Insurance Institute, which offers long-term care benefits based on a patient's level of dependency, including home caregiving hours, access to day care centres, or funding toward full-time caregivers.

The National Health Insurance Law (1995) defines a standardised health services basket that any subscriber to a kupot holim is entitled to - including a list of medications deemed essential. Donepezil, rivastigmine and galatamine are part of the standardised health services basket, meaning that Israelis can access them at little to no cost - a co-payment can occasionally be required. On the other hand, memantine and lecanemab are not part of the standardised health basket, requiring out-of-pocket or taking out private insurance. Israelis with supplementary insurance plans through their kupot holim or other providers are usually entitled to reduced co-payments, or could get some of these medications for free.

The Israeli National Insurance Institute administers a robust social safety net for Israeli citizens and permanent residents, who are entitled to a number of benefits meant to facilitate treatment and care of long-term illnesses, including Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Long-Term Care Insurance Law mandates a variety of benefits to eligible people, usually those who have reached retirement age. A formal assessment by a kupot holim is required to determine the level of dependency of a given person and, in turn, the scope of support provided free of charge to them. This support can include various services, such as assistance from a local carer for allocated hours,

attendance at day care centres (where available) or even the provision of care, especially when round the clock care and supervision is needed. A full list of services is readily available on the National Insurance Institute website. It is important to note that navigating the benefits provided by the National Insurance Institute can sometimes be complex, so it is advisable to seek assistance from social workers or relevant organisations in doing so.

People living with dementia could also choose to receive their benefits in cash, with the compensation depending on their level of dependency from other adults. In addition, they are entitled to an additional benefit in case they employ a full-time carer – with the compensation height associated with their dependency level and whether the carer employed is Israeli or a foreigner – one ranging between NIS 1,659 and 7,238.

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## Caregiver support

In Israel, families caring for people with dementia can access support through the National Insurance Institute, which provides long-term care benefits such as home care services and access to day care centres. Additional support is available from non-governmental organisations such as EMDA, Alzheimer's Association of Israel, which offers caregiver support groups, counselling, helplines, and educational resources in several languages. Some organisations also run day care programmes that provide cognitive activities for patients while offering respite for caregivers.

In Israel, families with a person living with dementia benefit from the robust social safety net administered by the National Insurance Institute – taking advantage of home care or hospice care services designed for these people. However, carers often have to rely on social services and non-governmental organisations in order to access needed support. EMDA is one such organisation, providing a variety of services to carers and families of people living with dementia, such as carer meetings, support groups, counselling and a phone helpline. In addition, EMDA is heavily involved in dementia education and training, producing resources for people living with dementia, their families, care partners and medical professionals in English, Hebrew, Arabic and Russian, while also running a Dementia Friends programme. Organisations such as ESHEL or the Israeli Alzheimer's Medical Centre also run day care centres for the elderly, which provide cognitive stimulation activities for people living with dementia, while also offering respite to carers.

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## Policy

Israel adopted a National Programme for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia in 2013, aimed at improving awareness, strengthening community and long-term care services, supporting caregivers, expanding professional training, and promoting research. While the programme helped increase public awareness and develop some training and support initiatives, evaluations suggest that implementation has been uneven due to limited dedicated funding and long-term planning. Policy and structural gaps remain, particularly regarding the Arab community, which reports lower levels of awareness and access to medical services.

### National dementia plan

Israel introduced the National Programme for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia in 2013, aimed at improving care and support for people living with dementia and their families. The programme focuses on raising public awareness, strengthening community health and long-term care services, improving caregiver support, expanding professional training, and promoting research. Although the strategy increased awareness and initiated some training and support initiatives, evaluations have found that implementation has been limited due to insufficient funding and the absence of long-term budgeting for dementia services.

In 2013, Israel launched its National Programme for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia – aimed at improving the lives of people living with dementia, their families and carers by developing a robust dementia management system, comprised of a network of high-quality services, ranging from prevention and early detection to end of life care. Key programme areas include:

- (1) Raising public awareness of dementia and reducing the stigmatization of people living with dementia, their families and care partners
- (2) Improving the array of community health services offered – with the aim of providing care at every stage of the illness
- (3) Updating legislation governing the provision of support to people living with dementia, their families and care partners (e. g. the Long-Term Care Insurance Law)
- (4) Developing responses to support family carers directly
- (5) Adapting the array of long-term care services in view of changing needs
- (6) Promoting and enhancing dementia care training among caregivers, medical professionals and, more broadly, the wider Israeli society
- (7) Supporting critical research needed for policy planning and service development

Almost a decade after its launch, a Knesset Research Department study assessed the implementation of the National Programme for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia. The findings revealed that while dementia awareness has increased and some limited progress has been made, the programme has largely lacked proper funding and comprehensive implementation. With few exceptions, it has not been adequately budgeted or implemented, and there is no evidence of comprehensive, long-term planning and budgeting based on assessed needs. Consequently, implementation has focused on less costly measures like professional training and

caregiver support, rather than more substantial investments in diagnostic and treatment infrastructure.

## References

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## Upcoming plans

No future reforms or initiatives concerning Alzheimer's disease or related dementias have been publicly announced in Israel at this time.

## Policy gaps

### Legal barriers

Family care partners in Israel often lack formal legal standing in medical decision-making under current legislation, despite their deep involvement in daily patient care. While healthcare professionals usually recognise and include families as mediators in practice, this lack of statutory status can create significant hurdles during the advanced stages of the disease. Furthermore, conflicts can arise in palliative settings where some medical staff argue that family carers should be excluded from final decision-making for terminally ill patients.

A number of legal barriers complicate the provision of appropriate dementia care, at least from the perspective of families in Israel. Family care partners play a significant role in assisting people living with dementia, including their involvement in making legal and moral medical decisions for the person. In most cases, family carers, despite their great involvement in looking after people living with dementia, have no formal legal standing in decision making according to the Capacity and Guardianship Law of 1962, the Patient Rights Act of 1996, and the Dying Patient Act of 2005. However, in practice, professional staff members usually recognize the person living with dementia and the family care partners as a single unit, considering the family carer as a mediator and representative of people living with dementia in advanced stages of the disease. Yet, one study found that some senior medical professionals argued that, when family carers choose hospice care for their terminally ill loved ones, they should accept not to be included in making decisions for the person living with dementia.

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### Cultural barriers

Cultural perceptions of dementia in Israel are heavily influenced by educational background, with some communities viewing cognitive decline as a normal part of the ageing process rather than a medical condition. Significant stigma surrounding the disease often leads to a reluctance to seek professional help, resulting in a lack of awareness regarding available diagnostic and treatment services. These barriers contribute to later-stage

diagnoses, particularly within Arab communities where patients are more frequently identified with advanced Alzheimer's rather than mild cognitive impairment.

Another study found that groups in Israel with a lower level of education, particularly if from an Arab background, have more limited awareness of dementia, perceiving it is a normal part of aging rather than a condition that needs treatment . In addition, these groups may have limited awareness of available services for dementia diagnosis and treatment, or may be reluctant to diagnose and treat dementia due to cultural stigma surrounding it. People of Arab descent in Israel were more commonly diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and less commonly with mild cognitive impairments compared to Jewish patients, giving some credence to the finding.

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## Research

Israel conducts Alzheimer's research across major universities, medical centres, and research institutes. Studies focus on early detection biomarkers, new therapeutic approaches, and the biological mechanisms of neurodegeneration. The country also supports clinical trials and cohort studies using large health-fund databases and prevention registries.

### Selected academic institutions

[Weizmann Institute of Science \(through its Schwartz Lab\)](#) [Hebrew University of Jerusalem](#) [Tel Aviv University](#) [Technion — Israel Institute of Technology \(through its Faculty of Biology\)](#) [Ben Gurion University of the Negev \(through its Molecular Cognition Lab\)](#) [National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev \(through its Neurodegenerative Diseases research group\)](#) [Israeli Alzheimer's Medical Centre \(through its Research Unit\)](#)

### Clinical trials and registries

The primary resource for clinical research in Israel is the Ministry of Health (MoH) Clinical Studies Database, which is the official government-mandated platform for registering and monitoring all human clinical trials conducted within the country. Managed by the Pharmaceuticals Division – Clinical Trials Department of the MoH, this searchable database provides detailed information on a wide range of studies for various conditions, including Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Complementing this broad database is the more specialised Israel Registry for Alzheimer's Prevention, managed by the Sheba Medical Centre. IRAP is a nationwide, long-term longitudinal project specifically designed to support dementia prevention research. It registers middle-aged individuals with a family history of Alzheimer's disease to identify midlife risk factors and create a "trial-ready" cohort for future clinical interventions.

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- <https://data.health.gov.il/trials/>
- [https://eng.sheba.co.il/IRAP\\_Study](https://eng.sheba.co.il/IRAP_Study)

## Selected innovative methods

Israel hosts a wide range of Alzheimer's research exploring new diagnostic and treatment approaches. Studies at institutions such as the Weizmann Institute of Science, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, the Technion, and Ben-Gurion University investigate immune-based therapies, early biological markers that may detect Alzheimer's years before symptoms appear, and molecular mechanisms involved in neurodegeneration. For example, researchers at Tel Aviv University demonstrated in an animal model that suppressing activity in a small thalamic brain region reduced pathological activity in the hippocampus and prevented memory deterioration associated with Alzheimer's disease. Clinical research is also conducted at centres such as the Israeli Alzheimer's Medical Centre and Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Centre, including studies of new treatments such as lecanemab for early Alzheimer's disease.

The Schwartz Lab at the Weizmann Institute of Science is researching the use of immune checkpoint blockades – specifically targeting PD-1 – to boost systemic immunity and activate the choroid plexus, facilitating immune cell entry into the brain to clear amyloid plaques and mitigate cognitive decline in Alzheimer's disease models .

A global team of researchers – led by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) – is studying distinct cellular pathways in the brain that indicate markers for future onset of Alzheimer's disease, some 20 years before symptoms would be exhibited. This early detection could eventually lead to a treatment to prevent the degenerative disease. Another group of researchers from the HUJ discovered a direct link between a family of mitochondrial origin RNA fragments and the rate of dementia progression in women.

Tel Aviv University researchers have found that suppression of neuronal activity in a small nucleus within the thalamus caused a decrease in pathological activity in the hippocampus, preventing the deterioration of the memory in Alzheimer's disease in an animal model.

Researchers from the Faculty of Biology at the Technion have discovered new mechanisms that affect protein synthesis folding and assembly in cells – processes essential for proper function and the prevention of neurodegenerative diseases.

Researchers from the Molecular Cognition Lab at Ben Gurion University of the Negev have developed a peptide, which is one of the fundamental substances in the production of proteins, with potential to prevent the PTEN protein – which weakens neural synapses at the onset of Alzheimer's disease – from degrading memory.

The Neurodegenerative Diseases research group of the National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev is working on the development of innovative immune-modulating and peptide-based therapeutic strategies for Alzheimer's disease – utilizing model systems to unveil mechanisms of neurodegeneration and assessment of naturally occurring plant extracts to halt cell loss.

Medical professionals and researchers at Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Centre conducted a pioneering study focusing on real world outcomes for lecanemab treatments in people living with early-stage Alzheimer's disease. To facilitate the study, the Cognitive Neurology Unit established an infrastructure to facilitate advanced treatments for Alzheimer's disease, utilizing a multidisciplinary approach to patient screening, diagnosis, treatment initiation and follow up. The findings suggest a differential response across age groups, consistent with clinical trial data. Continued longitudinal follow-up is needed to assess long term efficacy and safety of lecanemab treatments.

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- <https://americansforbgu.org/bgu-discover-alzheimers-treatment/>
- <https://nibn.co.il/group/neurodegenerative-diseases/>

## Support

Organisations such as EMDA, Melabev, and Ezer Mizion offer caregiver support, counselling, and community-based dementia services, while broader ageing initiatives led by ESHEL and volunteer organisations like Yad Sarah and Milbat provide practical assistance, day care programmes, and assistive technologies for patients and families. There is no dedicated dementia media outlet in Israel, with most information and awareness materials shared through organisational websites and social media.

*Organizations are listed for informational purposes based on publicly available sources. Inclusion does not necessarily indicate affiliation with or endorsement by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI).*

### **Selected national associations, patient family associations, NGOs:**

[\(1\) EMDA - Alzheimer's Association of Israel](#) [\(2\) Melabev Association](#) [\(3\) Alzheimer Centre Tzippora Fried](#) [\(4\) ESHEL - Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged](#) [\(5\) Yad Sarah](#) [\(6\) Milbat](#)

### **Selected initiatives**

Several non-profit initiatives support people living with dementia and their families in Israel. EMDA – Alzheimer's Association of Israel provides caregiver support groups, counselling, helplines, education programmes, and public awareness initiatives such as the Dementia Friends campaign. Melabev Association offers community-based dementia care, including day care centres, home support, and specialized programmes for younger people with dementia. Alzheimer Centre Tzippora Fried (Ezer Mizion) provides counselling, advocacy, and family support services. ESHEL – Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged develops and supports national ageing services, including the establishment and development of day care centres for older adults. Additional community support is provided by organisations such as Milbat, which develops assistive technologies for people with disabilities, and Yad Sarah, a major volunteer-based organisation offering medical equipment lending and home-care support services.

#### **EMDA**

A non-profit organisation founded in 1988 by family members of people living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia to provide support for individuals and families through carer meetings, support groups (both in-person and via Zoom), counselling services, and a dedicated helpline. The organisation maintains free multilingual online resources, conducts educational seminars for medical professionals, runs the Dementia Friends initiative in Israel, and represents the country as a member of Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) and Alzheimer Europe.

#### **Melabev Association**

A non-profit organisation in Israel that provides high-quality community services and has developed a unique professional method for treating individuals living with Alzheimer's disease. It operates day care centres, provides home and nursing care support, and offers the specialised Peima programme to support younger people living with dementia.

## Alzheimer Centre Tzipora Fried

A designated centre of Ezer Mizion that assists families affected by dementia through public awareness, advocacy, support system building, and counselling services across multiple outposts, including Bnei Brak, Petah Tikva, and Netanya.

## ESHEL

An organisation dedicated to improving the status and quality of life for the elderly in Israel by developing services that provide sociocultural activities, personal care, and professional therapeutic services under one roof. It manages a comprehensive network of day care centres that are included in the basket of services under the Long-Term Care Insurance Law, providing essential respite for family caregivers.

## Milbat (Israeli Centre for Assistive Devices, Construction and Transportation for People with Disabilities)

A non-profit public association that operates nationwide to help individuals with diminished physical capabilities achieve maximum independence through specially designed and fully customisable technology. Supported by expert paramedics and over 600 volunteers, it provides consultation, development, and guidance services to assist the elderly and disabled people of all ages.

## Yad Sarah

The leading volunteer-staffed organisation in Israel providing a wide array of health and home care services, including wheelchair-accessible transportation, outreach to the homebound, advocacy against elderly abuse, and in-home geriatric dental care. The organisation significantly reduces national healthcare costs through its extensive home hospitalisation equipment lending services.

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- <https://www.melabev.org.il/en/front-page/>
- <https://www.northerncharitable.org/alzheimer-centre-tzipora-fried>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16828519/>
- <https://www.milbat.org.il/en/>
- <https://yadsarah.org/about-us/>

## Dedicated media outlets

While Israeli media does occasionally address Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, coverage, particularly regarding access to treatment, new testing methods in the local context and the lived experiences of people living with dementia and families, remains limited. EMDA maintains a number of online resources for people living with dementia, families and caregivers on its website, while also aiming to raise awareness of its activities and of dementia in general through its Facebook page and YouTube channel.

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