

# **Misperceptions of a Lost Identity: Conscious Awareness in Dementia Care & Why the Arts Matter in Social Prescriptions**



**Angel C. Duncan, PhDc MA, MFT, ATR**

Life Molecular Imaging, Director of Education for Medical Life Sciences- USA

Yale University Art Gallery, Co-Founder Arts in Mind

Cognitive Dynamics Foundation, Executive Arts Director

[a.duncan@life-mi.com](mailto:a.duncan@life-mi.com) / [aduncan@ut.edu](mailto:aduncan@ut.edu)

# Mental Health & Aging

*Journal of Aging Studies*

Study participants: 60 to 93 years

Identified six priorities of successful aging in key outcomes:

1. Having a sense of purpose
2. Positive interactions with others
3. Engaging in personal growth
4. Having self-acceptance (valued)
5. Autonomy
6. Good health



Naomi Feil, Validation Therapy

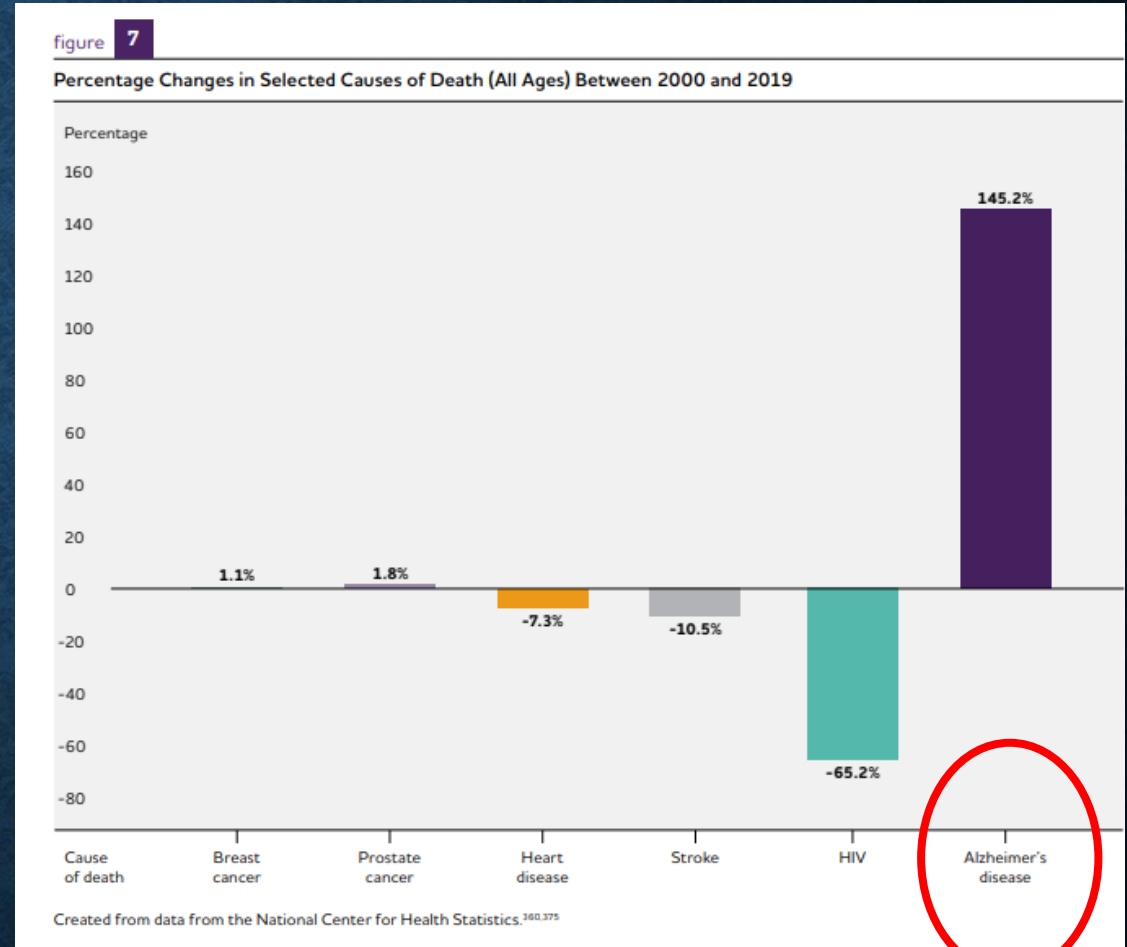
# Alzheimer's Disease in the U.S.

- Estimated **6.5 million Americans** have AD
- Estimated **1 in 8 persons aged 65** and over have AD
- Estimated **50% of persons over 85** have AD
- Every **64 seconds** someone in the U.S. develops AD
- **Women aged 65** and over: **1:11** chance for breast cancer; **1:6** for AD
- **Hispanic/Latino, Black/African Americans, Indian & Native Americans** are estimated to be **twice as likely** to develop AD

**2021 Costs of Alzheimer's = \$355 Billion**

<b>\$181b</b>	<b>59b</b>	<b>\$39b</b>
<b>Medicare</b>	<b>Medicaid</b>	<b>Other</b>

2020= \$305 Billion  
 2019= \$290 Billion  
 2018= \$277 Billion



# Current Drug Treatment Options

What's  
Your  
Story



## Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (AChE)

Aricept (donepezil)

Exelon (rivastigmine)

Razadyne (galantamine)

## N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA)

Namenda (Memantine)

## Combo

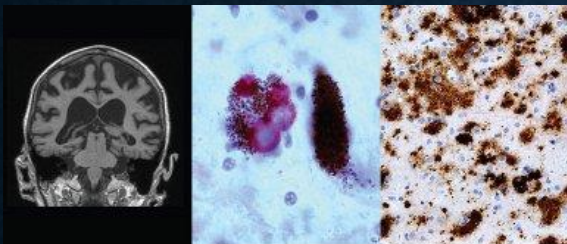
Namzaric (memantine/donepezil)

\*aduhelm

## Psychotropics

Haldol, Seroquel, Abilify, Risperdal,  
Geodon, Zyprexa



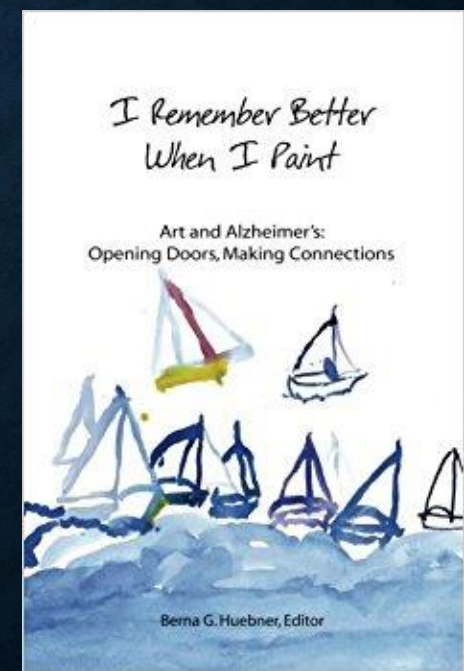
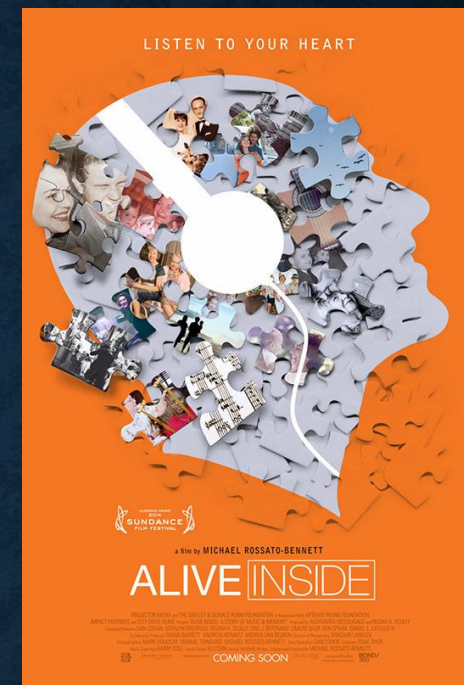
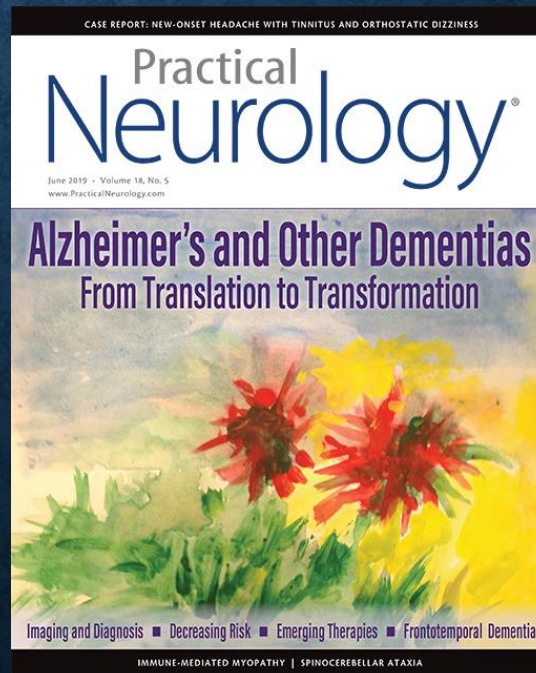
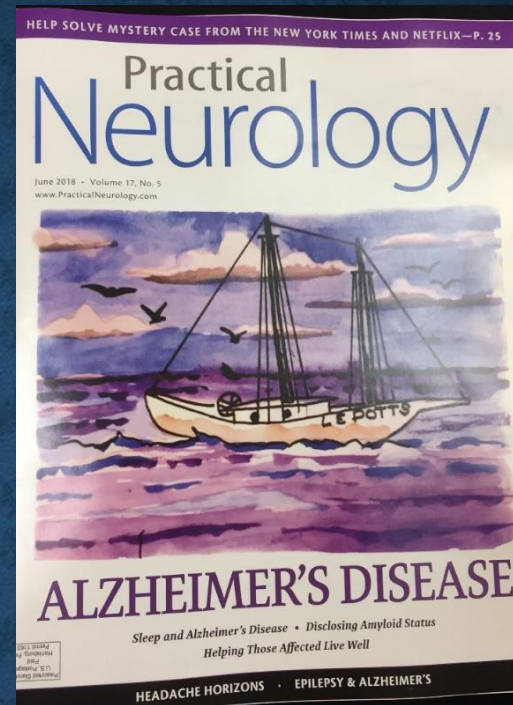
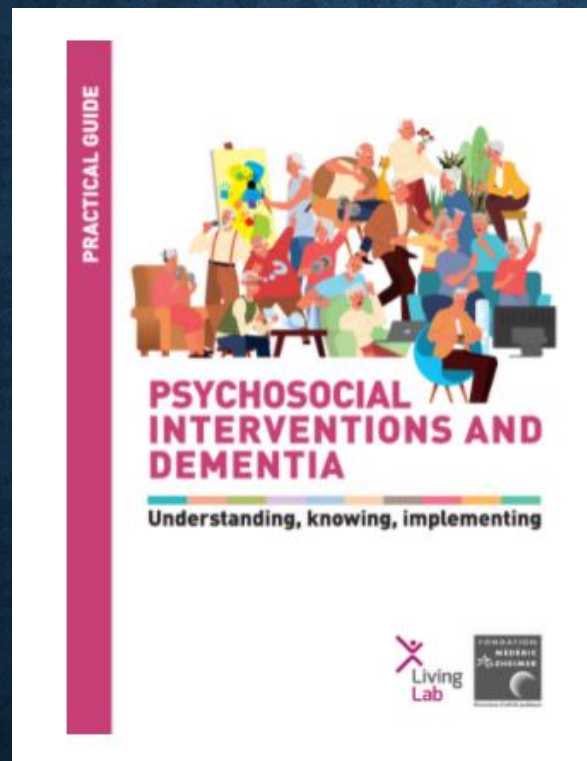
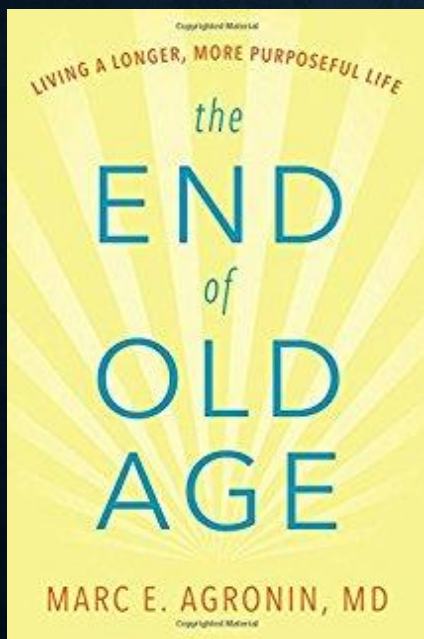


# GERIATRIC NEUROLOGY

EDITED BY  
ANIL K. NAIR | MARWAN N. SABBAGH



WILEY Blackwell



Gene Cohen, MD, PhD  
Center on Aging, Health & Humanities  
George Washington University Medical Center

Journal of Aging, Humanities and The Arts  
Official Journal of the Gerontological Society of America



*Creativity increases with the latter years in life ~ Dr. Cohen*

Conducted a longitudinal study on creativity in people 65yrs and older:

**Results:**

Physical health ↑

Morale ↑

Activity level ↑

Number of doctor visits ↓

Medication usage ↓

Depression ↓

*Cohen's theory was that creativity improves mental and physical health*

# Arts in Mind Yale University Art Gallery





Augunstein, S. (2012). At Newark Museum, Busy Hands Stimulate Minds for Alzheimer's Patients. *The Star Ledger*, URL: [https://www.nj.com/news/2012/06/newark\\_museum\\_helps\\_alzheimers.html](https://www.nj.com/news/2012/06/newark_museum_helps_alzheimers.html)

## Arts in Mind: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Museum Programs for Persons Living with Young-Onset and Early-Stage Alzheimer's Disease

Rachel Thompson  
Yale University  
Angel Duncan  
University of Tampa  
Jessica Sack  
Yale University

### ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on Arts in Mind, an ongoing museum-based program for those with Young-onset Alzheimer's or in the early stages of memory loss. Co-developed in 2019 by the authors, an art therapist with experience in Alzheimer's clinical trials research and two museum educators. Arts in Mind is a monthly program that invites people living with Young-onset Alzheimer's and their care partners to look at and make art together. Arts in Mind responds to a previously unmet need for programming specifically designed for the Young-onset Alzheimer's population and individuals in early stages of the disease. Sessions are anchored in the art encounter, accessible, responsive, and experiential. Additionally, the program a site of mentorship for the next generation of art therapists, museum educators and medical professionals. This paper offers a replicable and sustainable partnership model for museum and art therapy-based memory loss programs for an often overlooked population.

### KEY WORDS

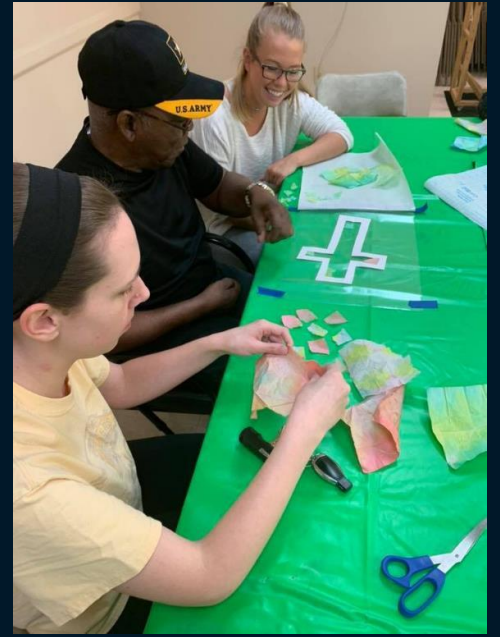
Museum education, Alzheimer's Disease, Art Therapy, Young-onset, Memory Loss, Social Prescription

*"This public, yet protected, environment allows for a sense of intimacy, both among the group and between participant and care partner, while maintaining an environment of excitement, spontaneity, and connection that comes with a social outing."*

- |           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| USA       | Greece          |
| England   | South Africa    |
| Ireland   | Hong Kong       |
| Germany   | Tunisia         |
| Lithuania | Slovenia        |
| Poland    | The Netherlands |
| France    | India           |
| Italy     |                 |



# Bringing Art to Life



# Key Takeaways

*As neurons in persons living with Alzheimer's disease diminish, does this rob their consciousness?*

- Persons living with dementia are often branded as a complete loss of self
- The need for social prescriptions is essential- it strengthens community relationships
- Advocacy is the cornerstone of the educational process in spreading awareness
- Provide the *opportunity* – inclusion for all

## Thank You

Angel C. Duncan

Bus Mb: (305) 413-9570 / [a.duncan@life-mi.com](mailto:a.duncan@life-mi.com)