

http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-37623217

List of dementia environmental risk factors drawn up

8 hours ago | Scotland

Share



Air pollution is included in the shortlist of environmental risk factors that may contribute to dementia

A shortlist of environmental factors that may contribute to the risk of developing dementia has been drawn up by experts.

The list includes exposure to air pollution and a lack of vitamin D, although researchers warned that there are not yet any solid conclusions.

It has been put together by Edinburgh University's Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Research Centre.

The centre believes future research should focus on the shortlist.

Dementia is known to be associated with lifestyle factors such as high blood pressure in mid-life, smoking, diabetes, obesity, depression and low educational attainment, as well as genetic factors.

But the Edinburgh researchers said a third of dementia risk was unexplained, and they want to determine whether other issues are at play, including the environment.

Previous studies

The team reviewed dozens of previous studies that considered environmental risk factors linked to dementia.

They found that a lack of vitamin D - produced by the body through exposure to sunlight - and exposure to air pollution were implicated, along with occupational exposure to some types of pesticide.

The research suggested that excessive levels of minerals found in drinking water may also be linked to the disease, but the evidence was mixed.

Dementia facts



- Dementia is a major global public health crisis expected to grow as people live longer
- Almost 47 million people live with dementia worldwide - predicted to increase to more than 131 million by 2050
- 90,000 people in Scotland have the disease
- Estimates indicate the disease costs the UK more than £26bn annually
- Worldwide dementia care costs exceed the market value of Google or Apple each year

There is a growing consensus among doctors that a significant proportion of cases could be prevented or delayed by addressing environmental factors linked to the disease.

The team behind the latest research said future studies should focus on the short list of environmental risk factors flagged up in their study.

'Important new area'

Dr Tom Russ, of the Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Research Centre, said: "Our ultimate goal is to prevent or delay the onset of dementia.

"Environmental risk factors are an important new area to consider here, particularly since we might be able to do something about them.

"We found that the evidence is particularly strong for air pollution and vitamin D deficiency. But we really need more research to find out whether these factors are actually causing dementia and how, and if so, what we can do to prevent this."

Jim Pearson, director of policy and researcher at Alzheimer Scotland, said: "The research study substantially improves our knowledge and understanding of environmental factors which may increase the risk of developing dementia and provides a basis for further, and more focused, research in this area.

"Dementia is a global public health priority. There are 90,000 people living with dementia in Scotland and the number is on the rise.

"We need much more research into the causes of dementia, treatments and supports that allow people to live well with dementia as well as the prevention and cure of dementia."

The research, published in the journal BMC Geriatrics, was funded by Alzheimer Scotland.

Related Topics

Dementia

Share this story

About sharing



More on this story

Thousands miss out on dementia support scheme

21 September 2016

NHS dementia atlas reveals patchy care

16 August 2016

Entertainer on life after a diagnosis of dementia

2 June 2016

BBC archive aid to trigger dementia patients' memories

1 June 2016

Related Internet links

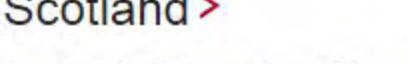
Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Research Centre

Alzheimer Scotland

BMC Geriatrics

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external Internet sites

Scotland



Human trafficking strategy launched

12 October 2016 | Scotland



Paige Doherty murderer faces sentence

12 October 2016 | Glasgow & West Scotland

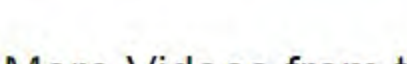


Church of Scotland moderator announced

12 October 2016 | Scotland

More Videos from the BBC

Recommended by Outbrain



Hotel rooms for hire: Young lovers get a break in Mumbai



Brexit ministers may find 'answers which escaped me' - Lord Heseltine



Asian hornet's nest near Tetbury found and destroyed



Communities First: Families 'reeling' from welfare reform



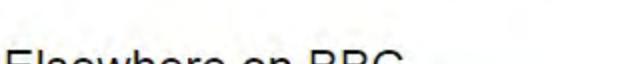
Scottish government: 'Schools should be safe places'



Labour: 'Get jihadis out of Aleppo' to stop Syria violence

Elsewhere on BBC

Recommended by Outbrain



BBC News

Syria conflict: Russia's Putin halts France visit amid row



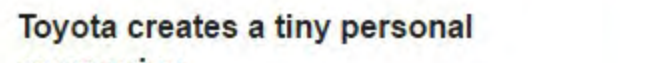
BBC Autos

Toyota creates a tiny personal companion



BBC News

Hurricane Matthew: 'Big bad beast' storm batters Florida



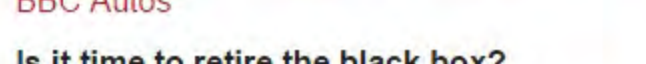
BBC Autos

Is it time to retire the black box?



BBC News

Rapist jailed for 'brutal' attack on dog walker



BBC Autos

Can this odd car make carpooling cool?

Top Stories

Obama blasts Trump with 7-Eleven jibe

President Obama blasts Donald Trump's recent remarks about women, saying they would be intolerable even if applying for a job at a 7-Eleven store.

2 hours ago

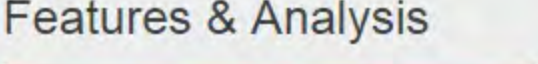
Lawyers 'will not defend' Paris suspect

2 hours ago

Greeks in China 'long before Marco Polo'

2 hours ago

Features & Analysis



Hillary haters

The dark depths of loathing for Hillary Clinton



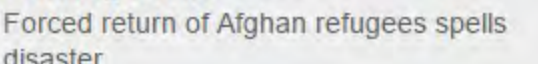
Coming home

Forced return of Afghan refugees spells disaster



Heroes and villains

Is New Zealand rugby facing a PR crisis?



Slumdog to Lion

Why Dev Patel could be onto a winner again



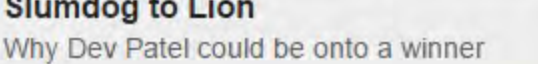
'No laughing matter'

Is it all over for non-creepy clowns?



Saying no to Pinochet

How the promise of happiness brought down a military regime



Politics of fear

Why this US election is different



Uncovering Capote

Never-before-seen images of a young Truman Capote



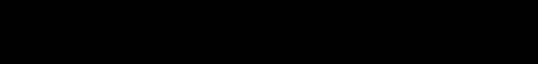
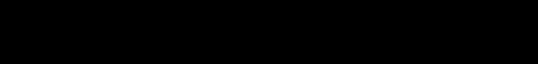
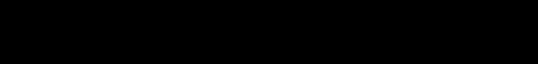
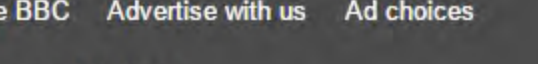
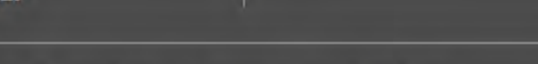
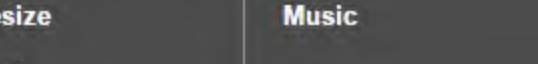
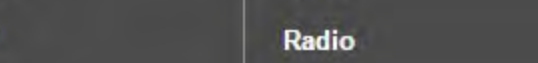
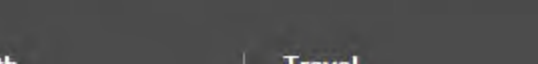
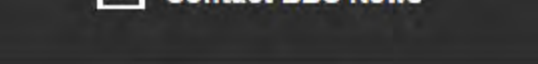
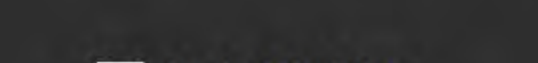
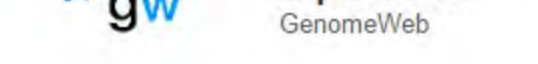
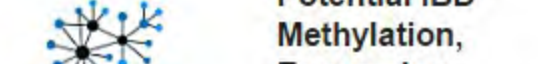
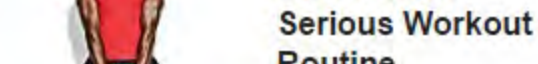
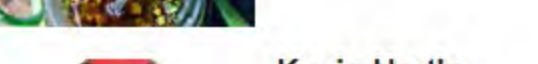
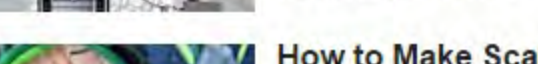
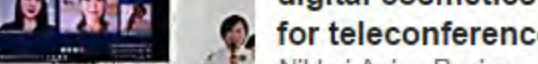
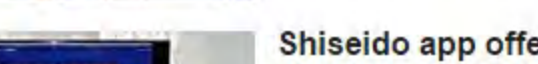
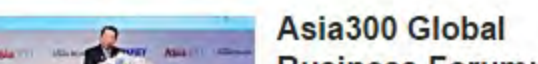
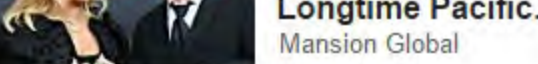
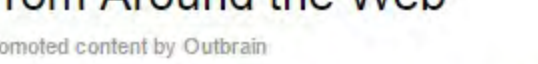
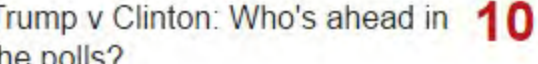
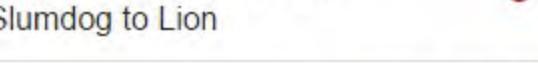
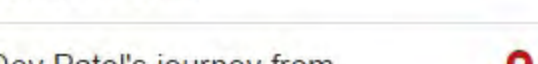
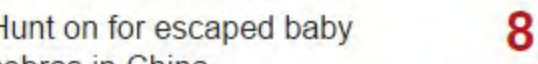
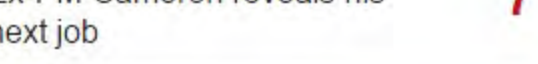
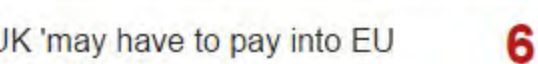
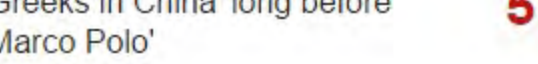
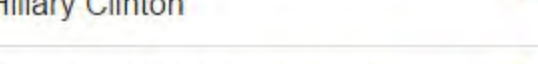
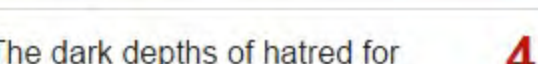
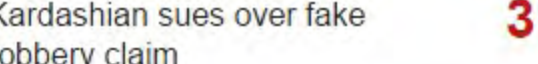
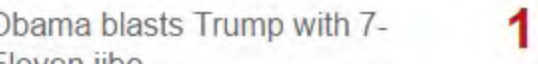
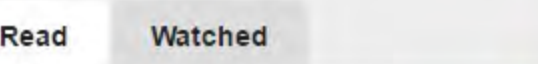
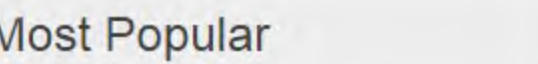
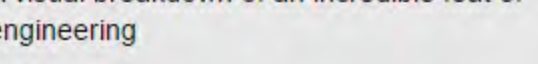
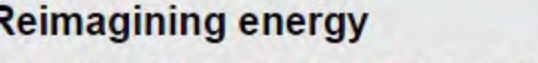
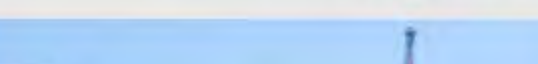
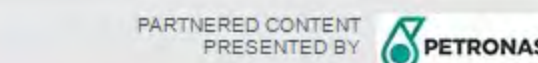
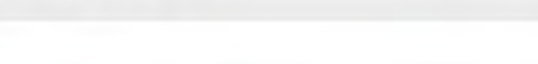
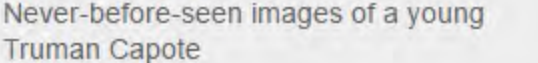
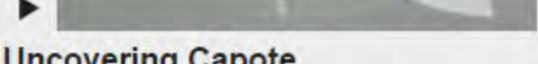
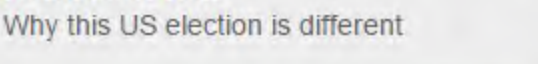
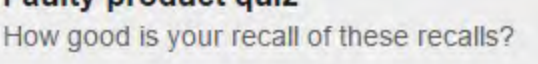
Faulty product quiz

How good is your recall of these recalls?



Reimagining energy

A visual breakdown of an incredible feat of engineering



BBC News Services

On your mobile