

factsheet

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Cognitive Data from the 2012 BRFSS

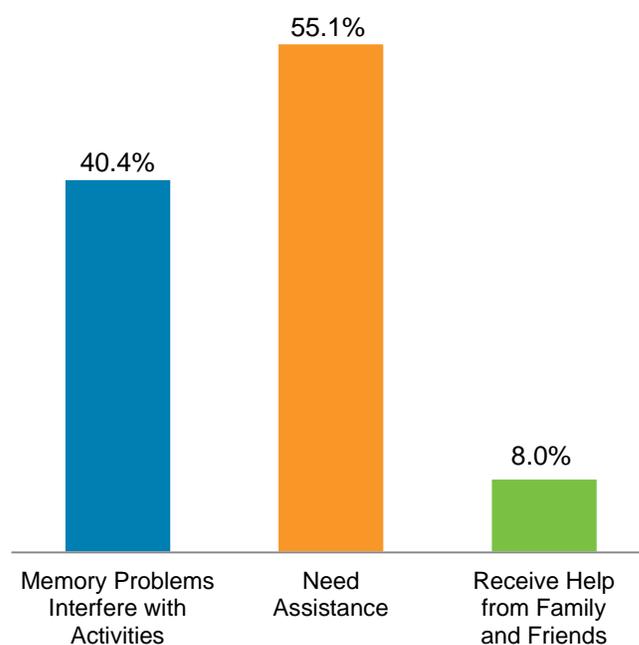
One in eight Americans aged 45 and older is experiencing confusion or memory loss that is happening more often or is getting worse (“cognitive decline”).

- Data from 21 states show that 12.5 percent of Americans aged 45 and over are experiencing cognitive decline.
- Among those experiencing cognitive decline, 25.7 percent live alone, and 21.1 percent have a household income of less than \$15,000.

For a large proportion of those experiencing cognitive decline, it is negatively affecting their ability to function.

- Two out of five adults aged 45 and older (40.4 percent) who are experiencing cognitive decline report that it has created “functional difficulties” – this is, it has caused them to give up household activities or chores, or has interfered with their ability to work, volunteer or engage in social activities.
- Over half say that because of their worsening memory problems they need assistance on at least one routine activity, such as household activities, personal care and transportation.
- For 8 percent, the difficulties have reached the point that they always or usually receive help on care or assistance from family and friends.

Percent with Cognitive Decline Who Say It Creates Difficulties and Burden



What Is the BRFSS?

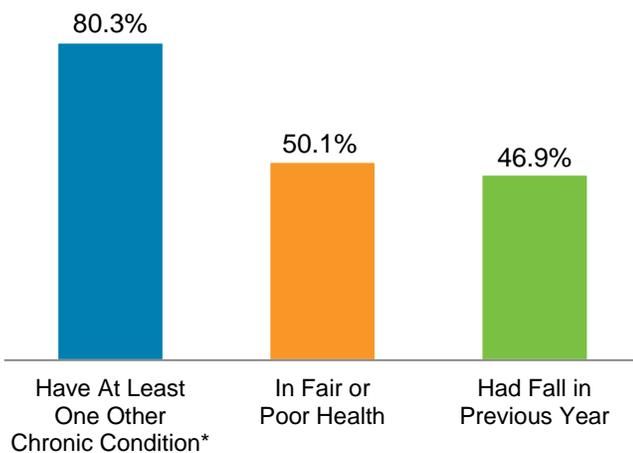
The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a public health survey conducted each year by all states, in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The data presented here come from the 2012 BRFSS Cognitive Module – an optional set of 10 questions that asks about memory problems, the burden of cognitive decline, and whether memory problems have been discussed with a health care professional. All data were analyzed by the CDC’s Healthy Aging Program.

Those experiencing cognitive decline have several additional specific health issues beyond increasing memory problems.

- Over 80 percent of those with cognitive decline have at least one other chronic condition (arthritis, asthma, COPD, cancer, cardiovascular disease and/or diabetes).
- Half say that, in general, they are in fair or poor health. On average, a person experiencing cognitive decline spent more than one third of the previous month (11.25 days) in poor physical health.
- Nearly 47 percent experienced a fall in the previous year – and 10.6 percent had a fall severe enough to cause an injury.

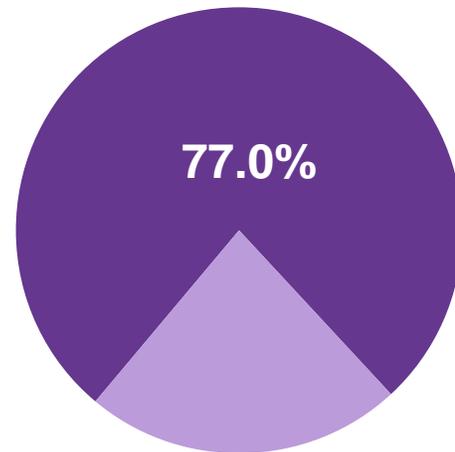
Percent with Cognitive Decline Who Have Other Health Issues



*Defined as arthritis, asthma, COPD, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.

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Percent with Cognitive Decline Who Have Not Talked to a Health Care Provider



Most are not talking about their memory problems with a health care professional.

- Increasingly, studies show those who report increased memory problems are at greater risk of developing Alzheimer's and other dementias.
- Yet, of those experiencing cognitive decline, nearly 80 percent have not talked to a health care provider about it.

Understanding Cognitive Decline

As used here, "cognitive decline" refers to those who self-report that, in the previous 12 months, they have experienced confusion or memory loss that is happening more often or is getting worse. While some of these individuals may have mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or be in the early stages of Alzheimer's or another dementia, "cognitive decline" does not measure the prevalence of any medical condition. Rather, it measures the prevalence of those with increasing memory problems, which may indicate the prevalence of those at greater risk of developing the disease.