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Drinking coffee 'reduces Alzheimer's risk'

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With data showing the number of over-65s living in Europe expected to increase from 15.4 per cent of the total population to 22.4 per cent over the next ten years and degenerative diseases therefore expected to rise in correlation, doctors are seeking potential preventative treatments for conditions such as Alzheimer's.

Research has emerged showing that one way to stop the onset of the mental illness could be through moderate coffee consumption, following a study from Alzheimer Europe and the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee.

Doctors found that between three and five cups of coffee a day would be the optimum amount for an individual to consume to prevent the development of a neurodegenerative illness.

In scientific terms, it is believed this is due to the presence high levels of compounds known as polyphenols in coffee having a protective effect on the brain. Previous studies have shown the beverage can reduce a person's risk of

developing Alzheimer's by as much as 20 per cent.

What's more, a recent paper on the subject involved a four-year follow-up period, with doctors finding that coffee drinkers were significantly less likely to develop dementia over this time.

Vice-chairperson of Alzheimer Europe Dr Iva Holmerova commented: 'The findings presented in this report are very encouraging and help to develop our understanding of the role nutrition can play in protecting against Alzheimer's disease.'

'Coffee is a very popular beverage enjoyed by millions of people around the world and I'm pleased to know that moderate, lifelong consumption can have a beneficial effect on the development of Alzheimer's disease.'

However, it was not just coffee that was found to be beneficial in preventing the development of degenerative conditions, as Mediterranean-style diets featuring foods and drinks such as fish, fruit, vegetables, olive oil and red wine have also been proven to help.

These findings have been published in a session report, which details the research presented by doctors during a talk entitled 'Nutrition and Cognitive Function' that took place in Glasgow in October.

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