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FROM THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026

LIFESTYLE PROGRAM IMPROVES BRAIN HEALTH AMONG OLDER ADULTS AT RISK FOR DEMENTIA ACROSS LATIN AMERICA

*- LatAm-FINGERS Study Findings Confirm and Expand U.S. POINTER Trial Results -
- Show Structured Dementia Risk Reduction Strategies Adaptable Across Cultures -*

Key Takeaways

- **The LatAm-FINGERS study shows lifestyle interventions adapted across Latin American cultures, health systems and communities can improve memory, thinking and overall cognitive function in older adults at risk for cognitive decline and dementia.**
- **The results reinforce findings from the U.S. POINTER trial showing that a multi-component lifestyle intervention with structured guidance, coaching and peer support improves cognitive function more than a self-guided approach in at-risk older adults.**

LONDON, July 13, 2026 — The Alzheimer's Association-funded Latin American Initiative for Lifestyle Intervention to Prevent Cognitive Decline (LatAm-FINGERS) found that two culturally tailored lifestyle interventions improved memory, thinking and overall cognitive function in older adults at risk of dementia across 11 Latin American countries, with the strongest gains seen in participants receiving structured support and coaching.

Findings from the two-year study reported today at the [Alzheimer's Association International Conference](#)[®] (AAIC[®]) 2026 in London and online build on and reinforce results from the U.S. Study to Protect Brain Health Through Lifestyle Intervention to Reduce Risk ([U.S. POINTER](#)), demonstrating that multidomain lifestyle interventions — including physical activity, healthy eating, cognitive training and social engagement — can be successfully adapted across diverse cultures, health systems and communities. The study is also being [published simultaneously in The Lancet](#).

“The results demonstrate for the first time in Latin America that culturally adapted lifestyle interventions can be successfully implemented across diverse countries and communities, and deliver cognitive benefits for populations that are often underrepresented in clinical research,” said Lucia Crivelli, Ph.D., lead author of the study and principal investigator at Fleni, a neurological institute in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

“We did not simply translate the U.S. POINTER model into Spanish and Portuguese. We adapted it to local cultures and habits while preserving its core elements — making the program practical, affordable and feasible as a public health strategy,” Crivelli added.

Multinational working groups with representatives from each participating country identified which components needed to remain standardized and which could be tailored locally based on culture, climate, food availability, technology access and participant preferences.

Physical activity programs incorporated culturally familiar activities such as salsa and tango, and outdoor group exercise in public parks. Nutrition counseling adapted the MIND diet to regional food traditions by relying more on foods such as avocado, quinoa, açai, aguaymanto, chia and pumpkin seeds as locally accessible alternatives. Study materials were translated and culturally adapted, with additional support for participants with limited digital experience.

“LatAm-FINGERS included significant racial and ethnic diversity, and a wide range in education and socioeconomic status (SES). The results demonstrate that brain health can be improved across diverse communities representing different cultures and with varying access to resources,” said Laura D. Baker, Ph.D., professor of gerontology and geriatrics, internal medicine, at Wake Forest University School of Medicine and Advocate Health, and U.S. POINTER principal investigator. “We now have a second strong finding in a completely different part of the world, which suggests that the U.S. POINTER formula can be adapted for anybody.”

“I am confident that we can successfully use the U.S. POINTER structured intervention to expand our tools and resources to further engage Latino and Hispanic communities in the U.S. — and beyond that to other communities — and the program will be equally effective,” Baker said.

Because Alzheimer’s and other dementias are influenced by multiple health and lifestyle factors, researchers believe addressing several risk factors together may offer the greatest benefit for brain health. As dementia rates rise worldwide, the findings highlight the potential for practical risk reduction strategies with accessible and adaptable lifestyle-based programs, particularly in areas that include low- and middle-income countries.

“The LatAm-FINGERS results add to U.S. POINTER findings by extending the evidence to Latin America and strengthening the case that these behavioral and lifestyle interventions can be adapted for diverse populations and communities worldwide,” said [Heather M. Snyder, Ph.D.](#), Alzheimer’s Association senior vice president of medical and scientific relations.

“A key message from this study is that structure and social support matter,” Snyder continued. “Addressing multiple lifestyle factors can positively impact brain health and may eventually be combined with emerging drug therapies to reduce cognitive decline and dementia risk.”

The study analysis included 1,065 participants across 12 sites in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two intervention groups, which differed in structure, intensity and level of support:

- The 539 participants in the Systematic Lifestyle Intervention (SLI) group received ongoing coaching and support, including supervised exercise, nutrition counseling based on an

- adapted MIND diet, computerized cognitive training, cardiovascular risk monitoring and 38 group meetings for social connection and accountability.
- The 526 participants in the Flexible Lifestyle Intervention (FLI) group received periodic health education and general lifestyle recommendations. Over the two-year period, they attended four group meetings where they received recommendations on diet, physical activity, cognitive and social engagement and vascular risk management without ongoing coaching or supervision.

After two years, participants in the SLI group demonstrated significantly greater cognitive improvement than those in the FLI group. The SLI group showed a 55% greater improvement on a composite measure of global cognition than the FLI group. Participants in the SLI group also demonstrated significantly greater improvements in memory, executive function and processing speed.

LatAm-FINGERS and U.S. POINTER are part of the [World-Wide FINGERS](#) network, based on the original Finnish [FINGER trial](#) showing that multidomain lifestyle interventions may help protect cognitive function in older adults at risk for decline.

The Alzheimer's Association has invested more than \$81 million in LatAm-FINGERS and U.S. POINTER and recently launched several public brain health initiatives informed by these findings, including the [Brain Health Habit Builder assessment tool](#), [Alzheimer's Association Brain Health Roundtable](#) and [Brain Health at Work](#). The recently launched [\(re\)think your brain™](#) initiative helps people move from brain health awareness to action and provides a “[recipe](#)” for healthy behaviors based on U.S. POINTER results.

About AAIC

AAIC is the world's largest gathering of researchers from around the world focused on Alzheimer's and other diseases that cause dementia. As a part of the Alzheimer's Association's research program, AAIC serves as a catalyst for generating new knowledge about dementia and fostering a vital, collegial research community.

- AAIC 2026: alz.org/aaic
- AAIC 2026 newsroom: alz.org/aaic/pressroom.asp
- AAIC 2026 hashtag: #AAIC26

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. Visit alz.org or call +1 800.272.3900.

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- Lucia Crivelli, Ph.D., et al. LatAm-FINGERS: Main Findings from a Large Randomized Controlled Trial of a Multidomain Lifestyle Intervention to Prevent Cognitive Decline Across Latin America. (Funding: Alzheimer’s Association)

***** AAIC 2026 news releases may contain updated data that does not match what is reported in the following abstract.**

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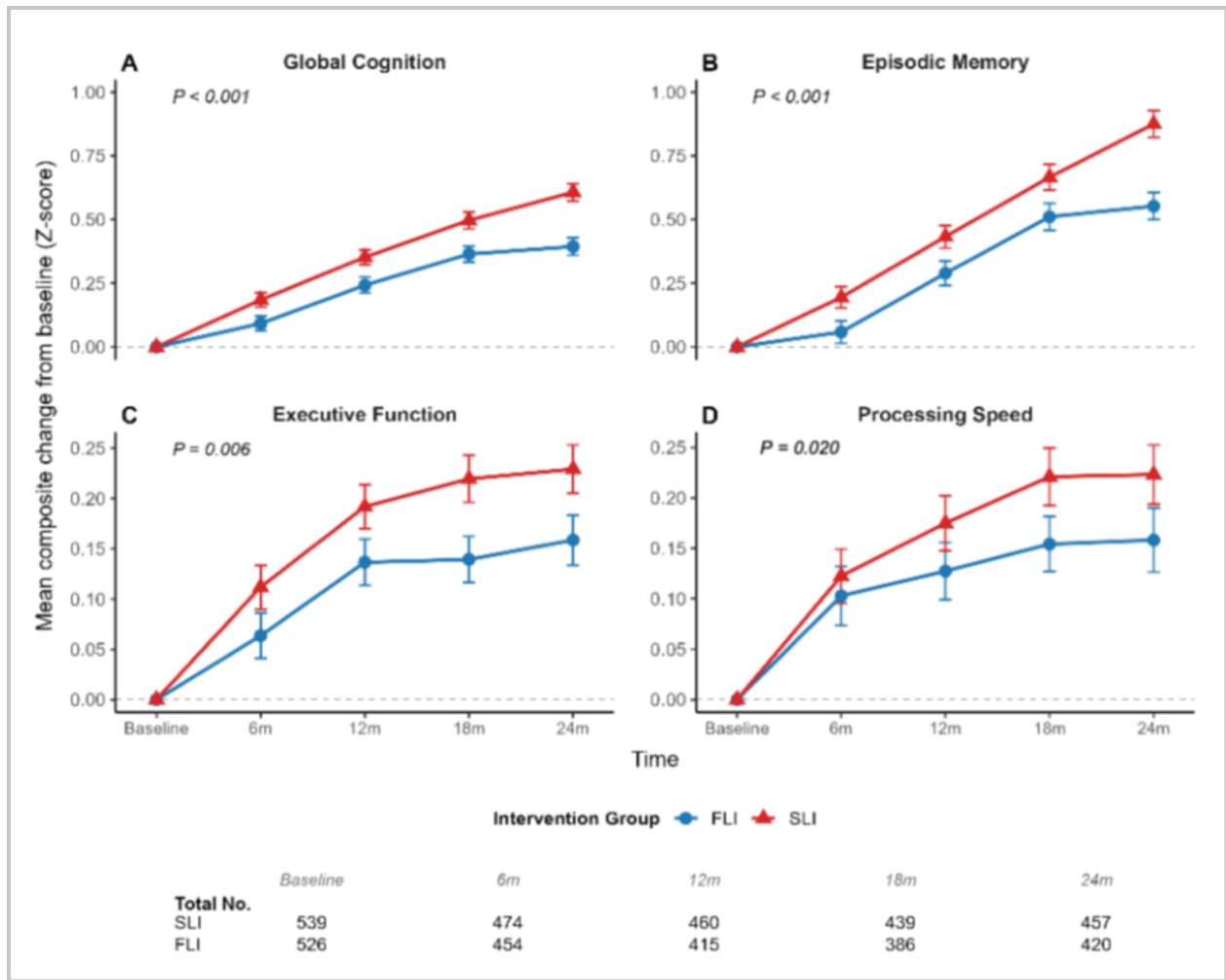
LatAm-FINGERS: Main Findings from a Large Randomized Controlled Trial of a Multidomain Lifestyle Intervention to Prevent Cognitive Decline Across Latin America

BACKGROUND: Multidomain lifestyle interventions may delay cognitive decline, but evidence from Latin America (LA) is limited. We investigated the efficacy and the feasibility of a culturally adapted multi-domain intervention on cognitive trajectories in at-risk older adults.

METHODS: LatAm-FINGERS is a single-blind, multicenter randomized clinical trial conducted across 12 LA countries. Adults aged 60–77 years with elevated dementia risk and suboptimal cognition were randomized to a 2-year Systematic Lifestyle Intervention (SLI; n=539) or Flexible Lifestyle Intervention (FLI; n=526). The primary outcomes were the change in global cognitive composite over time and the trial feasibility. Secondary outcomes included domain-specific composites. Longitudinal analyses used linear mixed-effects models under intention-to-treat and using inverse probability weighting (IPW) to account for participants’ loss during follow-up. Sensitivity analyses included multiple imputation, complete-case analysis, alternative outcome definitions, spline models, and adjustment for practice effects.

RESULTS: Among 1,065 randomized participants (mean age 67.5 ±4.7 years; 74.6% women, 70.7% self-identified as mestizo, indigenous, mulatto, mixed, or black), 877 (82.3%) completed 2-year follow-up. The SLI showed greater annual improvement in mean global cognition than the FLI (0.31 vs. 0.20 SD; difference, 0.11; 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.06 to 0.15; p<0.001). SLI also improved episodic memory (difference, 0.14 SD; 95% CI, 0.07 to 0.21; p<0.001), executive function (0.04 SD; 95% CI, 0.01 to 0.07; p=0.006), and processing speed (0.04 SD; 95% CI, 0.01 to 0.08; p=0.020) composites. Sensitivity analyses, including multiple imputation, expanded cognitive composites, and alternative model specifications, yielded consistent results across primary and secondary outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS: A structured multidomain lifestyle intervention significantly improved cognitive trajectories over two years compared with a flexible approach in Latin America. Findings were robust across multiple sensitivity analyses, supporting the findings regarding the intervention effects.



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