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FROM THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES "PROTECT-COG" STUDY TO TEST U.S. POINTER LIFESTYLE AND GLP-1 OR SIMILAR DRUG TO CUT RISK OF COGNITIVE DECLINE

LONDON, July 13, 2026 — The Alzheimer's Association today announced the launch of the PROTECT-Cog Study (Prevention of Risk fOr cogniTive dEcline through Combined Therapy), a first-of-its-kind global clinical trial designed to evaluate whether combining a proven multidomain lifestyle intervention with a metabolism-targeting drug, such as a GLP-1 agonist, can further reduce the risk of cognitive decline, mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and dementia in at-risk older adults.

The \$100 million effort was announced today for the first time at the [Alzheimer's Association International Conference](#)® (AAIC®) 2026 in London.

Building on the success of the Alzheimer's Association-led [U.S. POINTER](#), and LatAm FINGERS studies, PROTECT-Cog represents the next phase in advancing research focused on risk reduction/prevention strategies for Alzheimer's and other diseases that cause dementia.

"PROTECT-Cog builds directly on what we learned from U.S. POINTER and takes the next critical step in prevention science," said [Maria C. Carrillo, Ph.D.](#), chief science officer and medical affairs lead at the Alzheimer's Association, and principal investigator of the study. "By testing a combined approach that targets both lifestyle and biology, we have the opportunity to better understand how to meaningfully reduce the risk of cognitive decline before symptoms begin."

"Now is the time to accelerate bold, science-driven strategies to prevent or delay dementia," said [Joanne Pike, DrPH](#), president and CEO of the Alzheimer's Association. "The PROTECT-Cog Study reflects our commitment to leading large-scale, rigorous research that explores and expands urgently needed treatment options, including how combining interventions may deliver even greater benefit for those at highest risk."

A growing body of research demonstrates that modifiable lifestyle factors — including physical activity, nutrition, cardiovascular health, sleep, and social engagement — play a critical role in brain health and dementia risk. The [U.S. POINTER study showed](#) that a highly representative population of at-risk older Americans who followed a structured, multidomain lifestyle intervention experienced significantly greater cognitive benefits compared with those using a self-guided approach. These improvements were equivalent to approximately one to two years of cognitive advantage, along with additional benefits in reducing frailty and sleep apnea, and improving blood pressure regulation.

At the same time, emerging evidence from large real-world healthcare datasets suggests that GLP-1 receptor agonists may reduce dementia risk by 40–70% compared with other diabetes medications. Other studies suggest that they are most protective against dementia in patients with obesity or a high BMI. This is further supported by numerous mechanistic studies suggesting GLP-1 agonists play a role in brain inflammation and metabolism, and vascular health. There is clearly a need to better understand the timing and use of these therapies in prevention.

The PROTECT-Cog Study will enroll older adults who are at increased risk for cognitive decline and compare two lifestyle intervention approaches—a structured program with intensive coaching and support and a structured-lite program with the same core content but fewer participant touchpoints—to evaluate their effects on cognitive health. The study will also assess the impact of adding a drug that supports healthier metabolism and immune function to identify which intervention combination is most effective at delaying mild cognitive impairment while evaluating effects on frailty, quality of life, and overall health. Participants will be followed for three years, with comprehensive cognitive and health evaluations conducted every six months.

"The Alzheimer's Association is uniquely positioned to lead this next generation of dementia prevention research. Through our leadership of U.S. POINTER, LatAm FINGERS, and the World Wide FINGERS Network, the Association has established the global infrastructure, scientific expertise and partnerships required to conduct a study of this scale," said [Heather M. Snyder, Ph.D.](#), senior vice president of medical and scientific relations at the Alzheimer's Association, and staff lead on this project.

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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