



UK NSC dementia screening recommendation

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC does not currently recommend universal screening for dementia.

In order to offer enough information to allow anyone invited to screening to make an informed choice, we would first need to understand how dementia develops and be confident that early treatment will slow the progression or even prevent the disease. At the moment we cannot say that for certain.

Researchers have explored the effectiveness of tests to detect dementia and also 'mild cognitive impairment' which has been suggested to be an early sign of dementia.

Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

About 7 out of every 100 people over the age of 65 have dementia. If this age group was screened using current tests about 18 people would receive a positive test result, but:

- only 6 of these people would actually have dementia
- 12 people would receive a positive result when they don't have dementia
- 1 person who does have dementia would be missed and be falsely reassured

Between 7 and 17 out of every 100 people over the age of 65 demonstrate a mild cognitive impairment using current tests. But this does not always mean the person has or will develop dementia. Only about 5-10% of people with this will develop dementia each year. Because of this many people would receive positive test results when they would not actually develop dementia.

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC's dementia recommendation, please visit:

www.screening.nhs.uk/dementia

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) is chaired by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England, advises Ministers and the NHS in the four UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes. Using research evidence, pilot programmes and economic evaluation, it assesses the evidence for programmes against a set of internationally recognised criteria covering the condition, the test, the treatment options and the effectiveness and acceptability of the screening programme. Assessing programmes in this way is intended to ensure that they do more good than harm at a reasonable cost. The UK NSC also sets up practical mechanisms to oversee the introduction of new programmes in the English NHS and monitors effectiveness and quality of these programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at www.screening.nhs.uk. The UK NSC's policy review process is described at www.screening.nhs.uk/policyreview and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at www.screening.nhs.uk/policies

The UK NSC is supported by Public Health England (www.gov.uk/phe).