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Title: Need to formulate National Policy for treatment of old people suffering from dementia.

SHRI C. RAJENDRAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of this House and to the Government a serious health problem that is posing a great danger to the society.

Sir, presently more than 3.7 million people in India are suffering from dementia, a serious brain-related, memory loss problem. This chronic syndrome affects the memory of especially the older persons and their ability to think.

There are studies done by the World Health Organisation which show that in the next two decades, the number of people affected by dementia is expected to be doubled and the cost of treatment is going to be three times more. Moreover, the cost of taking care of a person with dementia is about Rs. 45,000 annually.

With the emergence of more and more nucleus families, the system of joint families no longer exists and the old people are left to fend for themselves. They are a depressed lot and come under severe mental stress and strain.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please don't go into detail and say what you want the Government to do.

SHRI C. RAJENDRAN : By 2050, people aged over 60 years would be more than 20 per cent of the world's population. They need proper care and attention at their ripe age.

The Government of India should establish a National Institute of Ageing. There has to be a National Policy for dealing with the old, giving special focus on people with dementia. The National Mental Health Programme should have a provision for treating this and the drugs/medicines should be made available through the public health care system.