

Quebec-based organization Lucilab calls on provincial parties to make Alzheimer's disease prevention a priority

Montreal, August 30th, 2022: Now that an election has been called, Quebec organization Lucilab, which is supported by researchers Isabelle Lussier and Sylvie Belleville, is asking the province's political parties to make the prevention of Alzheimer's disease a public health priority.

Alzheimer's disease: A growing issue for the province

In Quebec, more than 150,000 people live with a major neurocognitive disorder (MND), the most common one being Alzheimer's disease.¹ In light of the aging population, and without a cure, the number of people affected by this disease is expected to increase by 66%,² with costs reaching as high as \$16.6 billion by 2031.³ This will definitely put pressure on the health care system, which has already been weakened by various pandemic waves and labour shortages.

"This is a worsening issue with significant human and financial consequences. It is now time to make Alzheimer's prevention a public health priority," says Marc-André Chagnon, president of Lucilab, who lost his grandmother Lucie Chagnon to Alzheimer's disease in 2014.

We need a political commitment

Until we find a cure, prevention remains the most promising way to deal with the rising incidence of Alzheimer's disease. Indeed, recent scientific evidence suggests that up to 40% of Alzheimer's disease cases and other major neurocognitive disorders could be attributable to modifiable risk factors,⁴ many of which have to do with lifestyle habits.

And yet, despite the protective potential that adopting healthy lifestyle habits can have on the brain, in Quebec, most adults and seniors do not meet health recommendations. For example, only 37% of adults aged 45 to 64 are considered "active" in terms of transportation and physical activities,⁵ and more than 80% of people aged 51 and older do not regularly consume the minimum number of fruit and vegetable servings recommended for their age group.⁶ For this reason, the next government must implement strategies to promote the adoption of healthy lifestyle habits across Quebec, for all members of the population.

In hopes of sparking greater mobilization in this direction, Lucilab is asking Quebec's political parties to commit to collecting and providing access to data on the prevalence, incidence, and costs of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of MND in Quebec; increasing funding for prevention research; contributing to public awareness initiatives; and encouraging the adoption of protective behaviours among adults and seniors by increasing access to caregivers and technological tools to support them in their efforts.

¹ Government of Quebec, *Orientations ministérielles sur les troubles neurocognitifs majeurs*, Phase 3, 2022. (in French only)

² Federation of Quebec Alzheimer Societies 2020-2021 Impact Report.

³ Alzheimer Society Canada, *Prevalence and monetary costs of dementia in Canada*, 2016.

⁴ Livingston et al., *Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission*, *Lancet*, 2020 Aug 8; 396(10248): 413-446. 2020.

⁵ Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *"L'activité physique en quelques chiffres," 2014-2015*. (in French only)

⁶ INSPQ, *"La consommation des aliments chez les Québécois selon les recommandations du Guide alimentaire canadien," 2019*. (in French only).

The Luci App: A promising Quebec innovation

Quebec-based company Lucilab has created the Luci App to be part of the solution. Based on a preventive approach, Luci provides adults aged 45 to 70 with access to free support to help them adopt healthy lifestyle habits known to have a protective effect on the brain, namely physical activity, healthy eating, and intellectual stimulation.

“The Luci program is based on proven behaviour change techniques. The advisors who support the participants do not simply provide them with an exercise program and a seven-day meal plan. They do an in-depth investigation to figure out each individual’s motivations and barriers in order to come up with a personalized action plan with concrete goals,” explains Isabelle Lussier, doctor of neuropsychology and research director at Lucilab.

Scientific validation of the Luci program: Encouraging initial results

After undergoing a scientific validation process led by Dr. Isabelle Lussier and Dr. Sylvie Belleville, neuropsychologist and internationally renowned researcher in the field of neurocognitive disorders, Lucilab’s intervention program is starting to show results. When 120 volunteers needed to be recruited for the second study of the scientific validation process, more than 2,500 people showed interest. “In addition to the enthusiasm shown during the recruitment phase, early results show an over 90% participant retention rate and a nearly 85% appointment attendance rate. This just goes to show how eager participants were to take charge of their cognitive health,” says Dr. Lussier.

What’s more, the appointments with advisors seem to be paying off. Johanne Kennedy, whose mother and grandmother have both been affected by Alzheimer’s disease, is one of the participants in the study. When she was asked about her experience in the Luci program, she says she was able to overcome her personal obstacles and integrate new habits into her routine. “My advisor made me realize that even at 56, you can still learn new things. This has allowed me to broaden my horizons and believe in my abilities,” she says. Since participating in the study, Johanne has registered for CrossFit classes, taken online piano lessons, and learned new recipes inspired by the Mediterranean diet. “Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is not a one-size-fits-all formula. Everyone can find activities that they enjoy and do things that have great potential to promote brain health over time,” says Dr. Belleville.

More than ever, political parties need to commit to making the prevention of Alzheimer’s disease a public health priority so that Quebecers like Johanne can access services that will help them adopt healthy, sustainable lifestyle habits.

ABOUT LUCILAB

Supported by a scientific committee made up of six experienced researchers, Lucilab is putting science into practice with the Luci online program. Through its web application, Luci offers free support to people between the ages of 45 and 70 to help them adopt lifestyle habits that promote brain health. The program focuses on three areas: healthy eating, physical activity, and intellectual stimulation. Using behaviour change theory, it allows participants to identify their motivations and barriers to change and come up with personalized goals to help reduce their risk of cognitive decline.

- **For more information**, visit lucilab.ca
- **To request an interview**, please contact Anne-Marie Viens at amv@nacelles.co or 514-691-3872