

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Screening for Cognitive Impairment in Older Adults

More research is needed to make a recommendation for or against screening

WASHINGTON, D.C. – September 10, 2019 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review on screening for cognitive impairment in older adults. The Task Force determined that there is not enough evidence to make a recommendation for or against screening older adults without recognized signs or symptoms of cognitive impairment. **This is an I statement.**

Grade in this recommendation:

I: The balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined.

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Cognitive impairment is when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions. It can range from mild cognitive impairment which may not affect daily activities to dementia which makes everyday activities difficult. Alzheimer's disease is one type of cognitive impairment. Caregivers may also experience burdens related to caring for someone with cognitive impairment.

"Cognitive impairment is a serious public health problem affecting millions of older Americans and their families," says Task Force member Seth Landefeld, M.D. "Unfortunately, right now there is not enough evidence to make a recommendation for or against screening older adults without signs or symptoms of cognitive impairment."

The main risk factor for cognitive impairment is older age. As people age, their risk for cognitive impairment increases.

"More research is needed to address this important and challenging issue," says Task Force member Chyke Doubeni, M.D., M.P.H. "We need more research on whether screening and early detection improves healthcare decision-making and planning for patients, their families, and their clinicians."

The Task Force encourages clinicians to remain alert for signs or symptoms of cognitive impairment and talk with patients and families about any concerns they have.

The Task Force's draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review have been posted for public comment on the Task Force website at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. Comments can be submitted from September 10, 2019 to October 7, 2019 at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/tfcomment.htm.

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medications.

Dr. Landefeld is the chair of the Department of Medicine and the Spencer chair in medical science leadership at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Medicine. Dr. Landefeld also

serves on the board of directors of the American Board of Internal Medicine, the UAB Health System, and the University of Alabama Health Services Foundation.

Dr. Doubeni is a family physician and the inaugural director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Health Equity and Community Engagement Research, which addresses health disparities throughout the life course and advances the ideal of health equity locally and globally through research and community engagement.

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