

# Dealing with Dementia as research continues with international funding

"It is very important never to lose hope that a cure for dementia will be found," says Madré Fraenkel, innovations manager at the Livewell Suites memory care home in Somerset West.



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Her reaction follows the announcement of a fund created by US, UK and Canadian organisations to make the search for a cure for dementia a priority amongst scientists.

The fund has been established by Alzheimer's Research UK, the Alzheimer's Association in America and the Weston Brain Institute in Canada. This comes amid other reports of "fatigue" amongst traditional donors and funders in those countries who perceive that protracted research efforts have made limited headway in the pursuit of a cure.

Internationally people are realizing that finding a cure for dementia is vital because of the economic challenges the condition poses. "In addition, dementia has overtaken cancer as the number one health concern in the UK and ranks top of mind in SA too. The fund spurs scientists to have a cure by 2025 and hope is being pinned on two new medicines that will be tested soon."

She points out that the fund was created in First World countries, whereas nations such as South Africa have other issues to address as well. "HIV is just one of them and substantial energy and resources have been mobilised to finding a cure for this."

Dementia has increasingly been in the public spotlight of late, thanks in part to Hollywood. This year sees the release in South Africa of the film *Still Alice*, which tells the story of a linguistics professor played by Julianne Moore who is diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. The movie follows others that touch on the subject, including *The Iron Lady* (2011) with Meryl Streep, and *Barney's Version* (2010), starring Paul Giamatti.

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