The proportion of older people with dementia is declining 1-2.5% per year. However, as Americans live longer and the baby boomers age, the number of people with dementia is increasing.

Education gives adults an edge, reducing their dementia risk. Older adults who do not complete high school are 3x as likely to experience dementia as college graduates. Racial and socioeconomic disparities in dementia are large and persistent. Older people today are more educated than earlier generations—contributing to the dementia decline. Among Americans ages 55 to 69, rates of cognitive limitation are:

- Higher for black people than white people: 3x-4x higher for black people than white people.
- Higher for the poorest quarter of the population than the richest quarter: 7x-10x higher for the poorest quarter of the population than the richest quarter.

Dementia is one of the most expensive U.S. health conditions. Estimated yearly costs reach $215 billion and could more than double by 2040 as the large baby boom generation ages.*

* The estimated total U.S. dementia costs for 2010 range from $159 billion to $215 billion, depending on how unpaid caregivers’ time and lost wages are valued. For 2040, the range is $379 billion to $511 billion in 2010 dollars.

Looking ahead, the most effective way to reduce dementia prevalence in the future is to postpone its onset through preventive strategies and treatments.

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Sources: