

# Alzheimer — Crippling the Elderly

Three relatively recent drugs lead the market

*Insight and Outlook from IMS HEALTH*

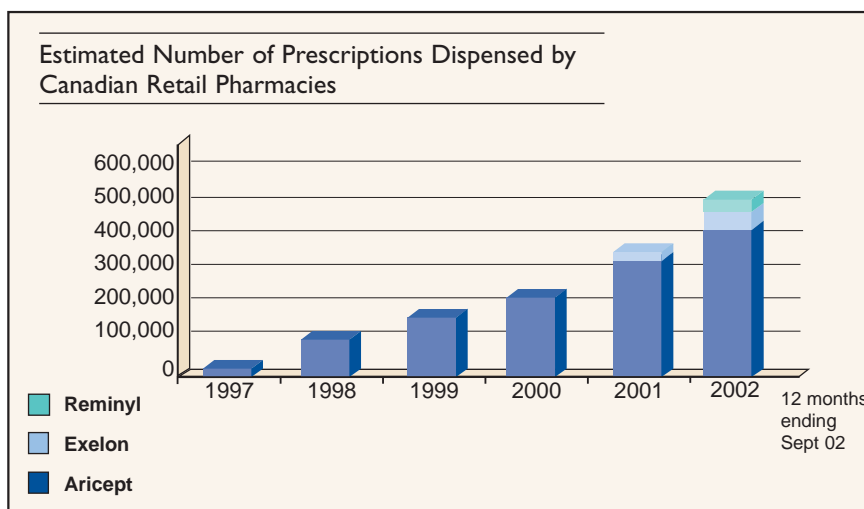
Alzheimer disease, the leading cause of dementia, affects mainly those over 65 years of age. Alzheimer leads to loss of memory, changes in mood and behaviour, as well as poor judgment and reasoning. Once thought of as senility, Alzheimer disease is not a normal part of aging as it gradually destroys vital nerve cells in the brain.

Although there is no known cure for the disease, three relatively recent Alzheimer drugs lead the market: Aricept®, launched in August 1997; Exelon™, available since June 2000; and Remyinl™, introduced in July 2001. These cholinesterase inhibitors are indicated for the symptomatic treatment of patients with mild to moderate dementia of the Alzheimer type.

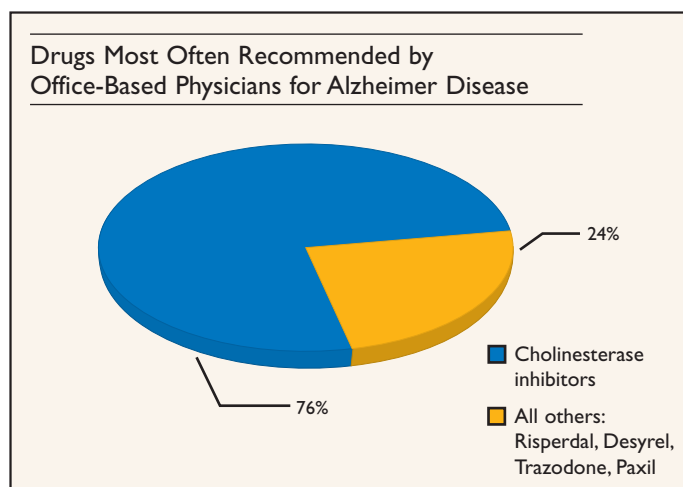
In the last 12 months ending September 2002, 508,000 prescriptions of cholinesterase inhibitors were dispensed by Canadian retail pharmacies—a 413% increase since 1998.

According to IMS data, over 376,000 visits for Alzheimer disease were made to Canadian office-based physicians in the last 12 months ending September 2002. Drug therapy was recommended in over 60% of these visits.

The physicians managing Alzheimer disease are mainly general practitioners, receiving 95% of all visits.

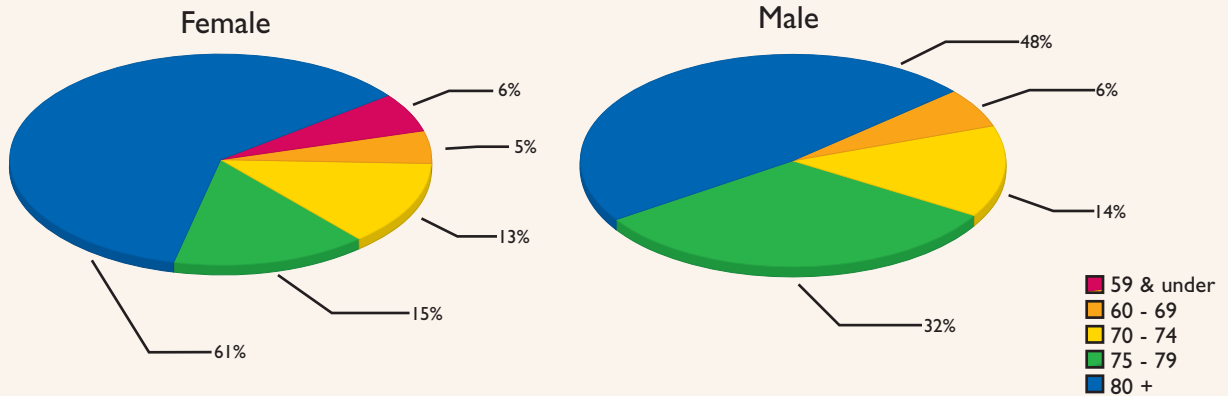


Source: IMS HEALTH, CompuScript



Source: IMS HEALTH, Canadian Disease and Therapeutic Index

Consultations for Alzheimer Disease, by Age and Gender



Source: IMS HEALTH, Canadian Disease and Therapeutic Index

For the same 12-month period, female patients made more visits (53%) than male patients (47%). Over 60% of female and 48% of male patients were over 80 years old.

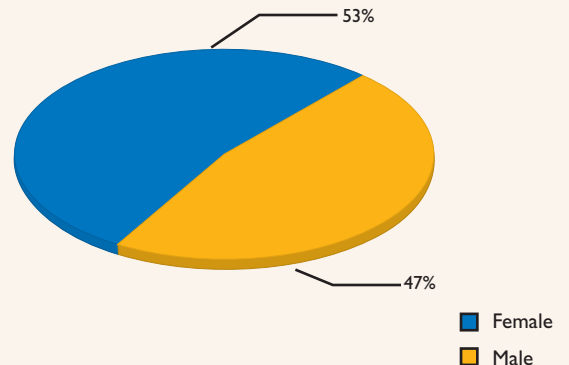
Although there are no approved treatments for later-stage Alzheimer patients, researchers at the New York University School of Medicine have reported promising results with Memantine, a substance developed by Mertz. This new drug does not stop or reverse the progression of the disease, but it is able to significantly reduce worsening of symptoms.<sup>1</sup> Memantine is currently available in Germany and is being tested in North America.

There are currently 364,000 Canadians suffering from Alzheimer disease or a related dementia.<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that the number will increase to 750,000 by the year 2031.<sup>3</sup> [CPM](#)

References

1. NYU Silberstein Aging & Dementia Research Center, <http://aging.med.nyu.edu/adrc/newsletter/memantine.html>
2. Alzheimer Society of Canada
3. Alzheimer Society of Canada

Consultations for Alzheimer Disease by Gender



Source: IMS HEALTH, Canadian Disease and Therapeutic Index

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