

Embargoed till Friday 20 September 2019, 0001 Hrs

Stigma Of Dementia Still A Major Issue Globally

Alzheimer's Disease Association launches publicity campaign with three-part video series showcasing persons of dementia living well #DespiteDementia

Singapore, 20 September 2019 – Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), the global network of 100 Alzheimer associations from around the world, has today released the World Alzheimer's Report 2019 titled *Attitudes to Dementia*, one day ahead of World Alzheimer's Day (21 September). The report reveals the results of the largest survey ever undertaken to assess attitudes to dementia globally, with responses from almost 70,000 people across 155 countries and territories, including Singapore. Analysis of the study was carried out by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

The World Alzheimer's Report revealed two main global issues: that awareness of dementia is low, and that stigma is the main deterrent preventing people from seeking out clear answers and information.

The World Alzheimer's Report findings also largely mirror a local study done in Singapore in April 2019. Titled *Remember.For.Me*, the nationwide survey was jointly conducted by the Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA) in Singapore and the Singapore Management University (SMU) to shed more light on awareness of the disease and stigma levels in the country.

| Global key findings (September 2019) | Singapore key findings (April 2019) |
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| About 66% of people still think that dementia is a normal part of ageing | About 56% of the general public think their knowledge of dementia is low |
| Around 50% of persons with dementia feel ignored by healthcare professionals such as physicians and nurses | 56% of persons with dementia said that others treat them as less competent |
| 35% of caregivers globally have hidden the diagnosis of a person with dementia | Half of those with dementia feel ashamed of their condition, with stigma as the main reason |
| | 30% of caregivers feel embarrassed while caring for their loved ones with dementia in public |

Table 1: Comparison of global key findings against similar Singapore key findings

From the global findings, it is evident that stigma is an issue with persons with dementia feeling ignored and ashamed, while caregivers feel embarrassed about the diagnosis of their loved ones.

Ms Paola Barbarino, Chief Executive Officer of ADI, said: "Stigma is the single biggest barrier limiting people around the world from dramatically improving how they live with dementia. The consequences of stigma are therefore incredibly important to understand. At the individual level, stigma can undermine life goals and reduce participation in meaningful life activities as well as lower levels of well-being and quality of life. At the societal level, structural stigma and discrimination can influence levels of funding allocated to care and support."

Living well #DespiteDementia

To address the issue with stigma, the ADA will launch a brand new publicity campaign titled **#DespiteDementia** to help reduce social stigma of those living with dementia, families of persons with dementia and the communities around them. This campaign is in line with ADI's global campaign "Let's Talk About Dementia".

ADA conceptualised **#DespiteDementia** to target the current low knowledge levels by increasing education and exposure about dementia in the community. The campaign's name also seeks to urge people to focus on what those living with dementia can still do despite living with the condition.

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The **#DespiteDementia** campaign will run for three years, with different themes each year. The first year's theme is "Live **#DespiteDementia**", which focuses on how persons with dementia and their families need not alter their way and quality of life drastically in spite of the condition and its accompanying struggles. Persons with dementia can live a fulfilling life like everyone else, with the only difference being the extra care or reminders they may need from their support systems – such as family members, carers, neighbours or social service agencies.

Subsequent phases of the campaign will support different themes centred around persons with dementia and the community.

This year's "Live **#DespiteDementia**" phase will include a series of three videos, each featuring how persons with dementia and their families go about their daily lives. These videos can be viewed on YouTube and other social media channels such as Facebook, as well at ADA events, workshops and community talks throughout the year.

The first video follows the lives of the Lim family. Peter Lim, 81, the head of the household, has been living with dementia for the past 10 years. His primary caregiver is his wife Quee Eng, 76, who survived breast cancer. They have one child, Daniel, a 39-year-old who recently quit his full-time job to help care for his aged parents.

Daniel said: "Collaborating on this video with ADA was great for the whole family because it allowed my dad to share his personal story with the world. I think in Singapore, people still may not know what dementia is, or how to treat those around you who have dementia. My family and I have been stigmatised such as in restaurants, when my dad takes a bit longer to order his food. It's these kinds of seemingly small acts – the glares, the whispers or the impatience – that we as a community need to fight against."

The other two videos will be released over the course of the next 12 months.

The first video on the Lims will be launched at ADA's World Alzheimer's Month 2019 Carnival on 21 September 2019 by Chief Executive Officer Jason Foo and Musim Mas Holdings' Director and CFO, Mr Alvin Lim Ek Tie. Musim Mas is a strong partner of ADA and their efforts. In July 2019, the Singapore-based palm oil company – one of the largest in the world – donated S\$1 million to ADA to help fund its programmes.

Mr Lim said: "When we reached out to ADA to donate S\$1 million, we wanted the money to go beyond financial assistance. Through the **#DespiteDementia** videos, we aim to reduce social stigma and drive the message that having dementia does not mean one is incapable of having a good quality of life. As a result, persons with dementia and their families should not feel ashamed of their condition."

He added: "Through strong support networks and a more understanding society, we can all play a part in improving the lives of this growing group of people in Singapore. We hope that more corporations and the public can come out and support such a worthy cause because dementia may strike us anytime."

Mr Foo said: "ADA has always been dedicated to providing quality services and support for persons

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with dementia and their caregivers. However, as the Singapore population ages, we feel that it is very important to continue increasing awareness in the community, and to tackle the stigma on dementia.

“We hope that with the new **#DespiteDementia** campaign, we can encourage all to start thinking about each person with dementia as unique individuals who can continue to lead normal lives in the community and have the same needs and abilities as you and I.”

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About Alzheimer's Disease Association

ADA was formed in 1990 because of a growing concern for the needs of persons living with dementia and their caregivers. The Association hopes to reduce stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of dementia; enabling and involving persons living with dementia to be integrated and accepted in the community; and leading in the quality of dementia care services for persons living with dementia and their families. Striving towards a Dementia Inclusive Society through its four strategic service pillars – Centre-Based Care, Caregiver Support, Academy and Community Enabling – ADA aims to advocate and inspire the society to regard and respect persons living with dementia as individuals who can still lead purposeful and meaningful lives. For more information, visit <http://alz.org.sg/>.

About Alzheimer's Disease International

ADI is the international federation of Alzheimer associations around the world, in official relations with the World Health Organization. Each member is the Alzheimer association in their country who support people with dementia and their families. ADI's vision is prevention, care and inclusion today, and cure tomorrow. Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), headquartered in London, believes that the key to winning the fight against dementia lies in a unique combination of Global Solutions and local knowledge. As such, it works locally, by empowering Alzheimer associations to promote and offer care and support for people with dementia and their carers, while working globally to focus attention on dementia.

About #DespiteDementia

#DespiteDementia is an awareness campaign by ADA that aims to tackle the stigma faced by persons living with dementia and caregivers. Based on findings from the first national survey on dementia in Singapore (dubbed: [Remember.For.Me](#)) by Singapore Management University and ADA in April 2019, it highlights a need to continue increasing awareness on dementia and combat the stigma that surrounds it. *#DespiteDementia* reminds all of us to love and learn about persons with dementia and encourage them to live life to the fullest despite living with the condition. For more information, visit <http://alz.org.sg/despitedementia>.

About Musim Mas Holdings

Headquartered in Singapore, Musim Mas is one of the world's biggest players in the palm oil industry. Involved in every part of the palm oil supply chain: from managing plantations and mills to refining crude palm oil and manufacturing palm-based products, they are supported by an extensive fleet of ship tankers and barges that enhance their logistical capability. They have over 37,000 employees in 13 countries across Asia Pacific, Europe, and the Americas, committed to meeting global palm oil demand in an environmentally, socially and economically viable way.

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Alzheimer's Disease Association

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