Alzheimer's Alert!

A month before 21st September - World Alzheimer’s day, Himanshu Verma throws some light on facts of the disease, to spread awareness and knowledge amongst the readers.

Kulkarni family (name changed) is worried because the eldest member of their family, Mr. Shalesh Kulkarni who is 80 year old is missing since a few hours. But Mrs. Savita Kulkarni his wife and Mrs. Nandita Kulkarni his daughter-in-law have the exact idea where to search for him because this is not the first time that Mr. Kulkarni has gone missing. Mr. Kulkarni is a patient of Alzheimer's disease, a common form of Dementia (instability of mind).

"He mostly goes to station thinking he has to go somewhere for some work, then he forgets where to go and how to come back. Since then we keep a note in his pocket which contains our residential address. But he refuses to keep it as he thinks he not unwell at all. This is not the only thing. At times, he asks us about the rates of the flats and properties that are sold many years before. Once he took a big amount of cash to a neighbour to return the debts he thought he owed them," tells Mrs. Nandita. “Mr Kulkarni was 70 year old when he was first diagnosed with Alzheimer's, usually this disease is detected in people above 65 years of age. By and large, people avoid it, thinking that these forgetting patterns are due to growing age so initially it goes unnoticed, only to visit an expert (neurologist) when things get severe,” explains Dr. Deepak P. Advani.

Seven stages of diseases –
1. No impairment (normal function),
2. Very mild decline (early signs of Alzheimer's),
3. Mild cognitive decline (early stage – not necessarily all diagnosed),
4. Moderate cognitive decline (mild or early Alzheimer’s),
5. Moderate severe cognitive decline (moderate or mid-stage Alzheimer’s,
6. Severe cognitive decline (moderately severe or mid-stage Alzheimer’s),
7. Very severe cognitive decline (severe or late-stage Alzheimer’s)