

A Report from the Frontlines in Dallas TX

My observations on memory screening for dementia and the fund raising walk.

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This is a quick report from the front lines in Dallas TX.

Saturday November 12th was the Dallas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association's annual fund raising Walk. The Dallas walk is traditionally the largest one in North Texas and it was again this year.

The event was a tremendous success for all involved. As an early estimate, over 3,300 participants showed up and they raised over \$300,000.

It was held in a venue that could hold far more participants than the previous venues. Surprisingly, there were far fewer companies participating as local sponsors, or participating as vendors buying booth space at the event.

I questioned some of the vendors/sponsors there why there were so few of them. They told me that the prices required for participation had been raised so high this year (from last year) that only companies with a national presence could afford to pay the fees to exhibit or to be a sponsor.

To be fair, there were a couple of local companies there, but they must be doing well to pay the fees!

Nevertheless, \$300,000 isn't too bad, along with their \$250,000 from Blondes vs Brunettes for 2 events this year.

The second event I participated in was the **Alzheimer's Foundation of America's National Memory Screening** event on November 15th. I participated last year as well.

Last year we screened five individuals. Four of them were fine. One had suspicious results and needed to see a neurologist for further testing.

This year, we did a lot more publicizing of the event and 27 people showed up to be screened. 25 of the 27 were fine.

One had NPH (fluid on the brain) and she knew it. She was due to have the fluid drained off in the near future, and she told me she's always more cognitively together after the fluid is drained off. That makes sense to me. She didn't score well, but neither of us expected her to.

The last person was a man whose wife told me about his problems with his executive functions like organizing things, reconciling his checkbook and making lists of things to do. She said his memory is mostly intact and that he would score well on the memory screening test. And he did! He may have something like Fronto-temporal disease. I told her to take him to a neurologist who specializes in Fronto-temporal diseases.

What did I take away from this experience?

1. Most people there were there to confirm that they were OK.
2. People are worried about having dementia so much that ordinary aging lapses make them think that they have a dementia.
3. The memory screening test is useful for Alzheimer's only, not for any of the other dementias.

In my opinion they could use another screening test that screened for other cognitive deficits that just for memory loss alone. I think more people could be reached that way.

What do you think?