



## **Why is the Number of Cases on the Rise?**

Currently there are over 7.4 billion people in the world. Over the time it takes you to read this resource there will have been at least another 1000 people added to the total world population.

The most important factor behind these huge statistics is that many of these cases are in patients over the age of 60. In 2015, there were 901 million over 60s (12 per cent of the global population). Currently Europe has the largest percentage but rapid aging is occurring all over the world and it is predicted that by 2050 all major countries, except Africa, will have over a quarter of the population over the age of 60. Current predictions say the numbers will be 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050, and could rise to 3.2 billion in 2100.

This has massive socio-economic implications. There will be a smaller number of working age people to take care of the elderly. But most alarmingly, healthcare is going to be stretched beyond its current capability.

Neurodegeneration is most commonly associated with the aging population – as most neurodegenerative diseases occur over the age of 80. Therefore, as the world's population continues to age, there will be more and more people suffering these debilitating diseases.

**Question:** What other issues could the rising aging population result in, in terms of healthcare?

This means that there is a bigger need than ever for a cure for these diseases, but as you have seen by completing the activities and exploring the resources – this is currently not on the horizon. But research is continuing and scientists are expanding our understanding of how these diseases work. This will be essential to our effective management and perhaps, one day, our ability to prevent or reverse these diseases.