

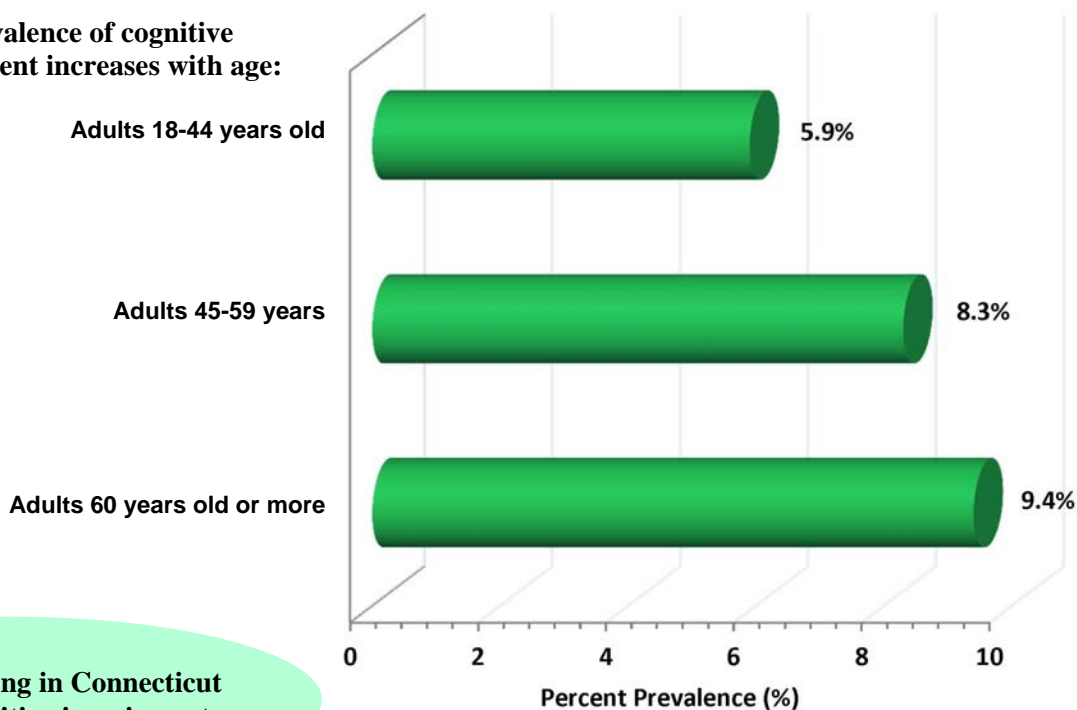
## Significance for Connecticut

**Cognitive impairment**, which can range from mild to severe, is characterized by difficulty remembering past events, learning new concepts, and/or concentrating and making decisions.<sup>1</sup> In severe cases, persons with cognitive impairment have trouble doing everyday activities and may be unable to live independently. Persons with Alzheimer’s disease and veterans with traumatic brain injuries are examples of persons living with cognitive impairment. Americans are more afraid of losing cognitive function than losing physical abilities,<sup>2</sup> and more than half are at least somewhat afraid of losing cognitive function in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

## Prevalence of Cognitive Impairment in Connecticut

About **2 in 25** adults in Connecticut report living with cognitive impairment.

The prevalence of cognitive impairment increases with age:



**1 in 9** veterans living in Connecticut report having cognitive impairment.

### Data Source & Definitions



Estimates of cognitive impairment in Connecticut were obtained from questions in the Connecticut Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (CT-BRFSS), the state’s health survey, during calendar year 2012. A total of 7,970 responses were recorded to a set of questions on cognitive impairment and were from residents with the ability to respond to survey questions. Responses from proxy adults about household members with cognitive impairment have been evaluated (M. Adams, On Target Health Data LLC, Suffield, CT). Cognitive impairment was defined here as confusion or memory loss that has gotten worse in the past 12 months. Statewide prevalence of Alzheimer’s diagnosis was not possible from self-reports.

The CT-BRFSS, with funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; grant number 5-U58SO000003), is a voluntary landline/cell phone population-based survey of randomly selected adult citizen volunteers that monitors the health and well-being of its residents.

# Severity of Cognitive Impairment in Connecticut

**Among the roughly 100,000 Connecticut residents at least 45 years old who are living with cognitive impairment:**

- One-third report having functional limitations;
- 1 in 4 have given up at least some household chores and activities;
- One-fourth report interference with work, volunteer, or social activities;
- More than half report the need for assistance with household tasks.

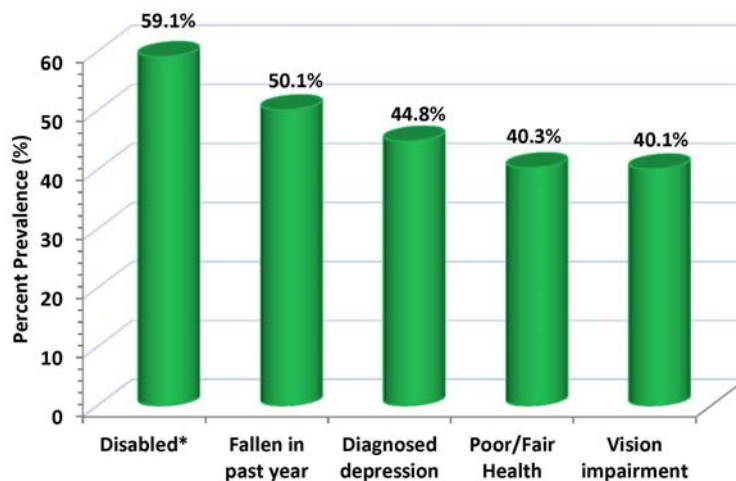
Only 1 in 3 have discussed the problem with a healthcare provider.

Nearly 80% have a co-existing chronic health condition, such as cardiovascular disease, asthma, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, and/or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

At least 40% report that they have:

- ✓ A disability\*
- ✓ Diagnosed depression
- ✓ Vision impairment
- ✓ Fallen in the past year
- ✓ No better than fair health

\*Disabled is defined as limited due to physical, mental, or emotional problems, or a health problem that requires special equipment, such as a cane, wheelchair, special bed, or special telephone.



## Strategies for Connecticut <sup>4</sup>

- **Increase awareness about the signs of cognitive impairment.**
- **Encourage a brain-healthy lifestyle that includes:**
  - ✓ Healthy eating
  - ✓ Regular exercise
  - ✓ Keeping an active mind
- **Encourage early diagnosis, sustainable services, and caregiver support in the community.**

For more information about traumatic brain injury and falls in Connecticut, please contact Dr. Chinedu Okeke, Injury Prevention Program, Connecticut Department of Public Health, 860-509-7654, [Chinedu.Okeke@ct.gov](mailto:Chinedu.Okeke@ct.gov).

For more information about the Healthy Brain Initiative, visit the website at <http://www.cdc.gov/aging/healthybrain>.

### References

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) Cognitive Impairment: A Call for Action, Now! ([http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/cognitive\\_impairment/cogimp\\_policy\\_final.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/cognitive_impairment/cogimp_policy_final.pdf)), accessed on April 25, 2014.
- <sup>2</sup> Research! America. American Speaks: Poll Data Summary. Volume 7. Alexandria: Research! America, 2006 (<http://www.researchamerica.org/uploads/AmericanSpeaksV7.pdf>), accessed on April 28, 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> Childress, D (2002) American perceptions of aging in the 21st century: myths and reality of aging, National Council on the Aging, Washington DC ([http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/content-library/Innovations\\_1-2002\\_PerceptionsAging.pdf](http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/content-library/Innovations_1-2002_PerceptionsAging.pdf)), accessed on April 28, 2014.
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) Promoting brain health: Be a Champion! Make a Difference Today! ([http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/cognitive\\_impairment/cogimp\\_genaud\\_final.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/cognitive_impairment/cogimp_genaud_final.pdf)), accessed on April 25, 2014.

**Contact:** Carol Stone, PhD, MPH, MA, MAS, Health Statistics and Surveillance Section, Connecticut Department of Public Health, Hartford Connecticut.  
[Carol.Stone@ct.gov](mailto:Carol.Stone@ct.gov) (860-509-7147)

This factsheet can be viewed at:  
<http://www.ct.gov/dph/brfss>