



## Three more US studies show lead linked to higher dementia risk

The following are extracts from the article **Air Pollution, Lead May Drive Thousands of Alzheimer's Cases** by **Michele Late**, Public Health Watch newsletter, February 21, 2026.

Thanks to Richard Rabin, MSPH, Senior Trainer and Technical Consultant, Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health, for sending us the link:

<https://publichealthwatch.org/newsletter/the-watch-air-pollution-lead-may-drive-thousands-of-alzheimers-cases/>

[Question from LEAD Action News Editor: is anyone researching the potential of lead detox methodologies in adults to reduce dementia and other health risks of lead exposure?]

Being exposed to environmental poisons such as air pollution and lead can harm cognitive health. New research finds people exposed to the contaminants may have higher risks for dementia and problems thinking later in life.

As many as 18% of new dementia cases diagnosed annually in the U.S. — about 90,000 — could be linked to lifetime lead exposure, new [findings](#) in *Alzheimer's & Dementia* show.

Researchers examined health records of U.S. older adults, finding people with the highest estimated levels of lead in their bones had nearly three times the risk of Alzheimer's disease and more than twice the risk of any type of dementia....

The cognitive harms posed by lead can start early on in life. Another new [study](#) in *Neurology* links lead exposure before birth to lower performance on cognitive tests 60 years later. Researchers tested cognitive performance in a group of older adults and compared the results to levels of lead found in baby teeth collected from the seniors when they were young. ...

Cognitive function can also be harmed by unhealthy air, a hazard that more than 130 million Americans are exposed to regularly. A Feb. 17 [study](#) in *PLOS Medicine* found long-term exposure to fine-particle air pollution, also known as PM2.5, can directly raise risks for Alzheimer's disease....

Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, affects about 57 million people worldwide, and incidence is growing as more people live longer. PM2.5 comes from sources such as vehicle exhaust, power plants, wildfires and other types of burning fuel [Editor's note: each of these emission sources typically contains lead].