

SCOTTSDALE Tribune

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HEALTH

LESSON: Dr. Joel DeOcampo, with Scottsdale Neurological Consultants, speaks to a group at the Health Information Center at McDowell Village about how the brain works and ways to maximize brain health and function.

PAUL O'NEILL,
TRIBUNE



Seminar fights Alzheimer's with lessons on memory, brain health

Seniors gather for event at Scottsdale Healthcare center

By **JULIE JANOVSKY**
TRIBUNE

More than 5 million people are living with Alzheimer's disease in the United States, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Alex Haas, 85, of Paradise Valley doesn't want to join that sobering statistic.

"I did research and found half the people my age develop Alzheimer's disease. I thought I would inquire about it," said Haas, who along with his wife, Jo, joined about 40 fellow seniors Wednesday at Scottsdale Healthcare's Health Information Center on East McDowell Road for the center's "How to Increase Your Brain Power" seminar.

The ongoing, free two-hour seminar provided an overview of the degenerative disease and tips on how to keep the brain healthy.

"We're not trying to instill fear," said Jennifer Westlund, community outreach coordinator at Banner's Alzheimer's Institute. "We want people to be more mindful of their brain

health. We want them to be aware of Alzheimer's disease and that there is help available."

Westlund also discussed Banner's Alzheimer's registry, which allows participants — from those with normal memory to those with impaired cognitive skills — to volunteer in a number of memory and Alzheimer's studies.

While there is neither a cure for Alzheimer's nor a proven method for preventing it, Scottsdale neurologist Dr. Joel DeOcampo told the audience there are ways people can be more proactive.

DeOcampo said many factors contribute to memory loss, including stress, sleep deprivation and vitamin deficiencies. He advised the audience to take a memory screening, a test that may determine an underlying problem.

Lifestyle and diet play key roles, he said. DeOcampo recommended reducing fat intake and eating foods rich in folic acid, antioxidants and omega 3 fatty acids.

Moderate daily exercise, he said, helps reduce stress. He said stress releases cortisol, which can be harmful to the brain. Mental activities, such

Memory checkup

What: Free memory screening. A clinician will test your memory in a 10-minute exam.

When: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 9

Where: Scottsdale Healthcare Health Information Center, 8322 E. McDowell Road, Suite 105

Information: Call (480) 421-0598 to register or for additional information on free seminars and screenings.

as crossword puzzles and reading, he said, help sharpen the mind.

Maureen Michaels, 64, of Scottsdale said the seminar put some of her concerns to rest.

"I thought you either had Alzheimer's disease or you didn't," Michaels said.

Diane Johnson, 61, of Phoenix said that after experiencing some minor memory loss while having chemotherapy treatments a year ago, she's always on the lookout for tips on how to improve her memory.

"We can do so much for our brains if we work them," Johnson said.

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