

# Cultural Perceptions and Educational Needs of Healthcare Providers and Family Caregivers in Disorders of Memory and Behavior in Ghana

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## Health Equity Challenge

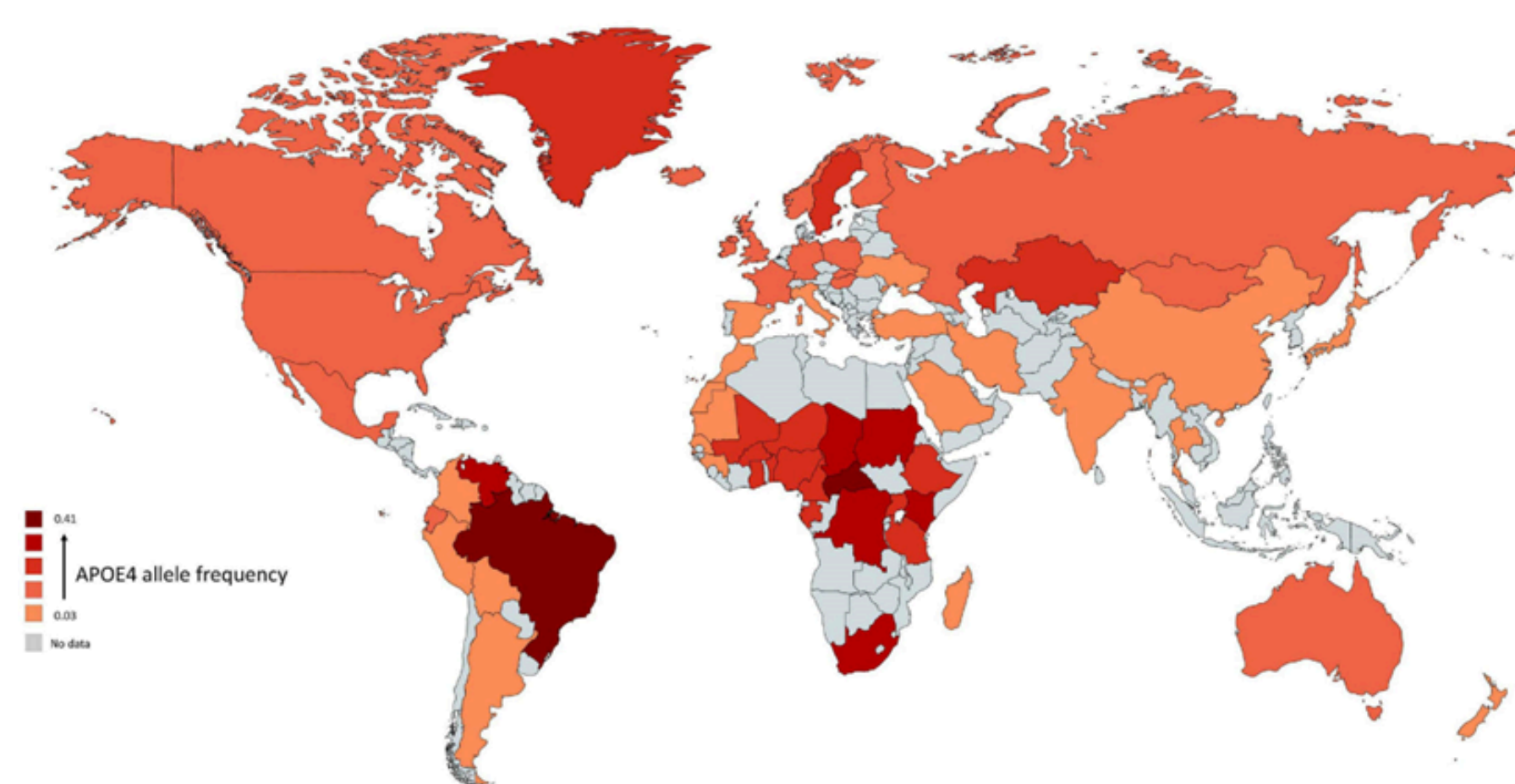


Growing burden of dementia in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa, ~ 150,000 people in Ghana lived with dementia in 2020, the largest aged population in the region (7.2% aged 60+ years), with a projected increase to 220,000 by 2030.

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Caring For The Aging Brain In Ghana

- Prevalence rates: 16% in 2014, 23.38% in 2024. Female prevalence: 24.56; Male prevalence: 21.31% .
- Significant underdiagnosis and socioeconomic disparities, stigma, and limited healthcare infrastructure.
- Memory loss is often seen as normal aging or a spiritual affliction.
- Family caregivers bear responsibility without training or support.
- Limited public awareness and professional education on dementia.
- Few structured dementia care programs in health facilities
- This project addresses these inequities by developing culturally grounded dementia education



Global distribution of APOE4...  
Husain MA, Laurent B, Plourde M. APOE, and Alzheimer's Disease: From Lipid Transport to Pathophysiology and Therapeutics. Front Neurosci. 2021



Map of Ghana  
Study Sites: Kumasi (urban) & Techiman (rural)

## Research Goals

- Explore cultural perceptions and beliefs about dementia among healthcare providers and caregivers.
- Assess social determinants of health and training needs in dementia care.
- Co-design and refine a culturally responsive educational program based on the DICE framework



The DICE Approach (Describe, Investigate, Create, Evaluate) was developed by Kales, Gitlin, and Lyketsos (2014) to guide person-centered management of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia. Learn more at [www.diceapproach.com](http://www.diceapproach.com) Permission to adapt from the authors was granted.

- Long-term Goal: Strengthen dementia awareness and culturally competent care in Ghana.

## Impact

- This work strengthens dementia awareness, diagnosis, and culturally appropriate care in Ghana.
- By co-developing education with communities, the project promotes inclusion and improved quality of life for people with dementia and their families.

## Research Experience

### Project Activities

- Coordinated ethical approvals in Ghana (KNUST granted, KATH revised and resubmitted)
- Adapted research tools suited to the local context
- Trained research assistants on respectful and ethical data collection
- Supported the adaptation of the DICE program, following the ADPAT-IT model [ Assessment–Decision–Adaptation–Production–Topical experts–Integration–Training–Testing) provides a systematic framework to guide the cultural and contextual adaptation of evidence-based interventions (Wingood and DiClemente,2008), it ensures that core intervention elements are preserved while enhancing local relevance and acceptability.

### Future Directions

- Pilot and refine culturally adapted DICE module
- Contribute to data collection efforts from caregivers and health care providers, data analysis, interpretation, and dissemination
- Scale up to assess training impact and reach

## Lesson Learned

- Developed cross-country ethics and coordination skills.
- Enhanced ability to adapt tools to diverse cultural contexts.
- Gained hands-on experience adapting dementia care tools to local cultures and training local research assistants who will collect data.
- Began to develop leadership skills in research management and coordination, and effective communication across a diverse, multidisciplinary research team.
- Learned that trust and equity grow through community engagement
- Key takeaway: This experience reinforced that sustainable global health impact begins with equitable local partnerships

## Partners



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