

Nordic Welfare Centre

Dementia prevention and
Brain Health promotion:
Insights from the Nordics

Nordic Welfare Centre

- An institution under the Nordic Council of Ministers
- Offices in Sweden and Finland with approx. 25 employees
- Receives assignments from the Nordic council of Ministers for Health and Social Affairs



Ours mission

- Facilitate nordic networks
- Enhance cooperation with the Baltic countries
- Contribute to development of welfare initiatives in the Nordic region by compiling and sharing knowledge



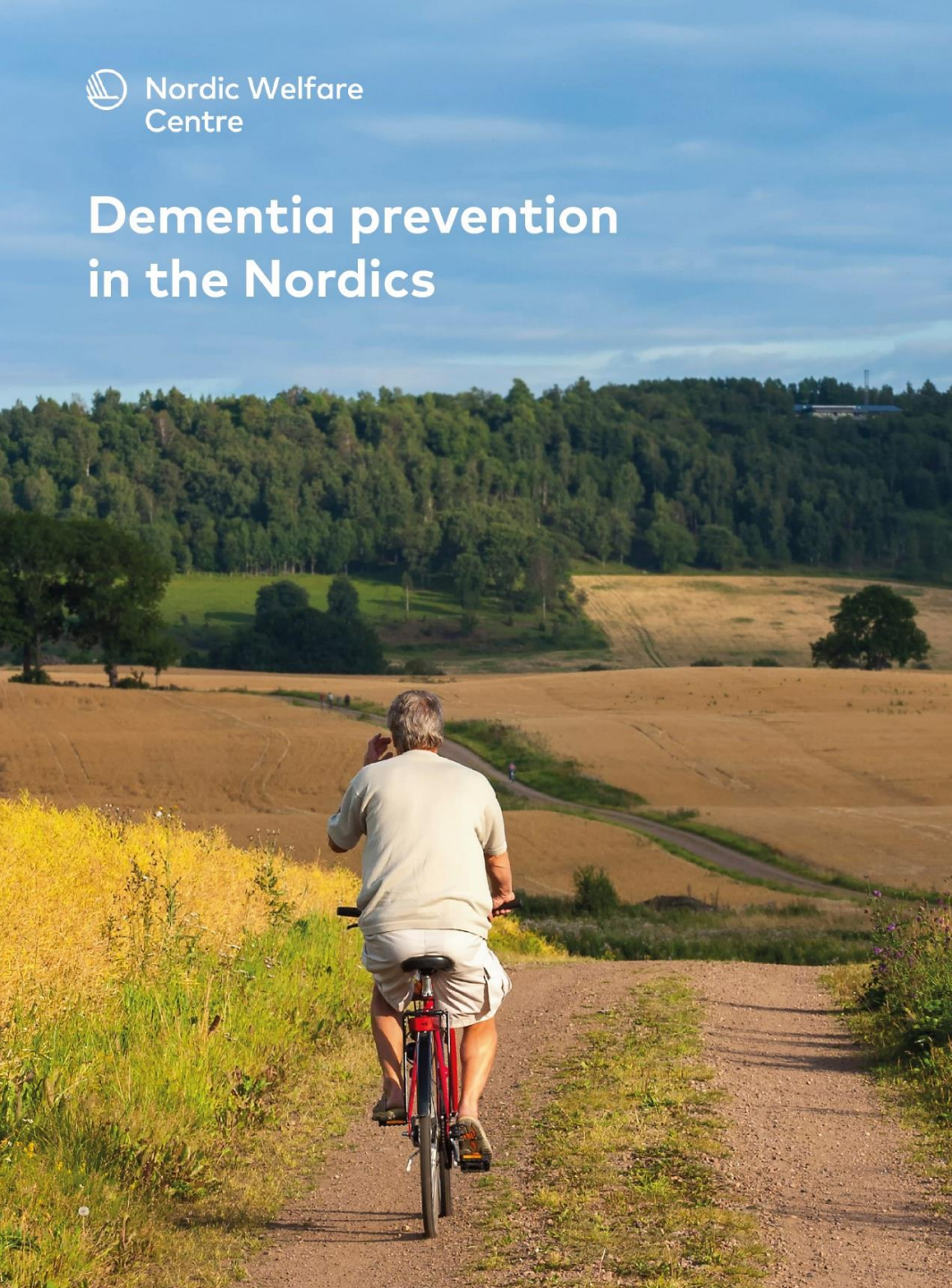
Dementia prevention

- Dementia presents major challenges to individuals and to the society.
- Effective treatment is lacking.
- Health enhancing environmental factors and healthy lifestyle can contribute to more life years in with good cognitive function.

How have the Nordic countries responded to the potential of dementia prevention?



Dementia prevention in the Nordics



Research on dementia prevention 2009-2024

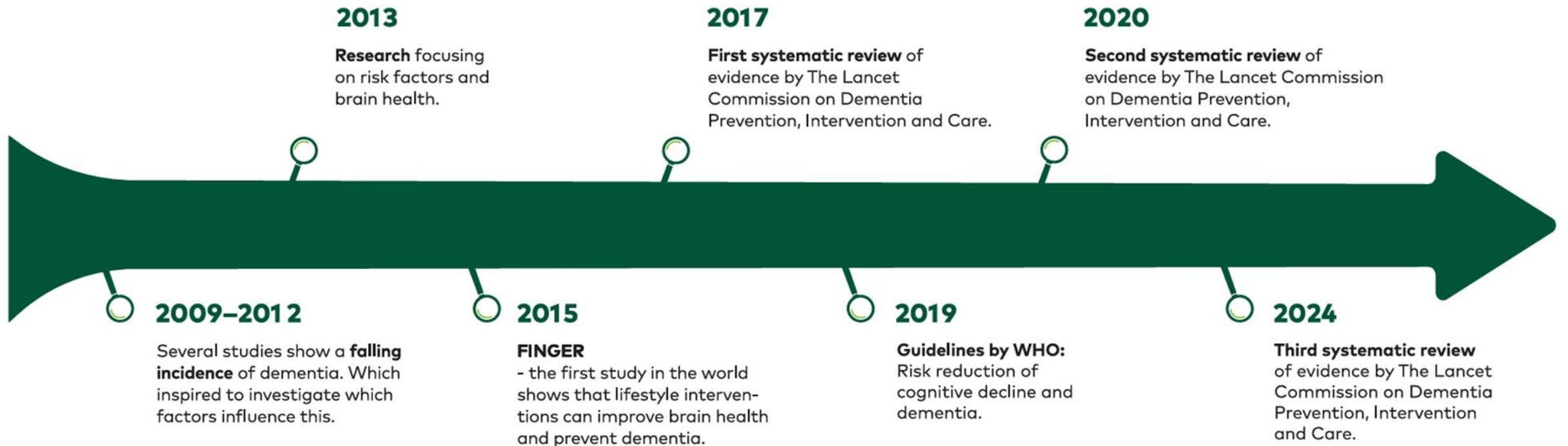


Figure designed by the Norwegian National Centre for Ageing and Health, Linn Lundsvoll/Grete Kjelvik, published in Dementia prevention in the Nordics (2024)



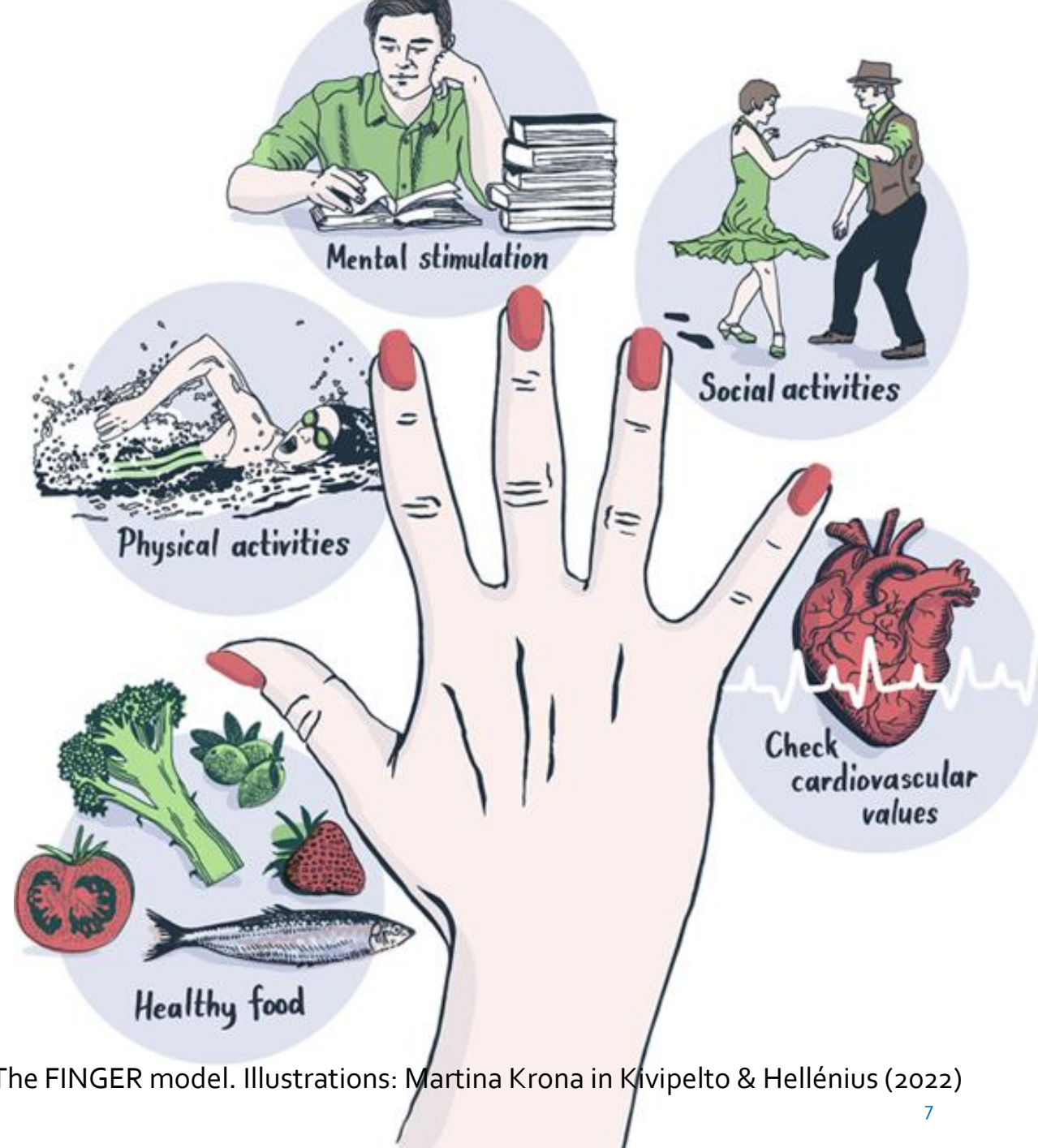
The FINGER-model

- Cognitive benefits
- 20 % lower risk for cardiovascular events
- 30 % lower risk for functional decline
- 60 % lower risk for chronic diseases
- Better health related quality of life
- Reduced costs for healthcare
- Health economic benefits

N = 1260
Age 60-77 years

The FINGER model is based on the Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to prevent cognitive decline and disability - the first study to show that a multidomain lifestyle intervention is beneficial for prevention of cognitive decline.

Ngandu, Kivipelto et al., Lancet (2015)



The FINGER model. Illustrations: Martina Krona in Kivipelto & Hellénus (2022)





We need to do everything we can to reduce our risk of dementia. The scientific evidence gathered for these Guidelines confirms what we have suspected for some time, that what is good for our heart, is also good for our brain.

Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (2019)



Riskfactors

Less education

Hearing loss

High LDL

Diabetes

High blood pressure in middle age

Obesity in middle age

Physical inactivity

Depression

Tobacco

Hearing loss

Traumatic brain injury

High alcohol consumption

Vision loss

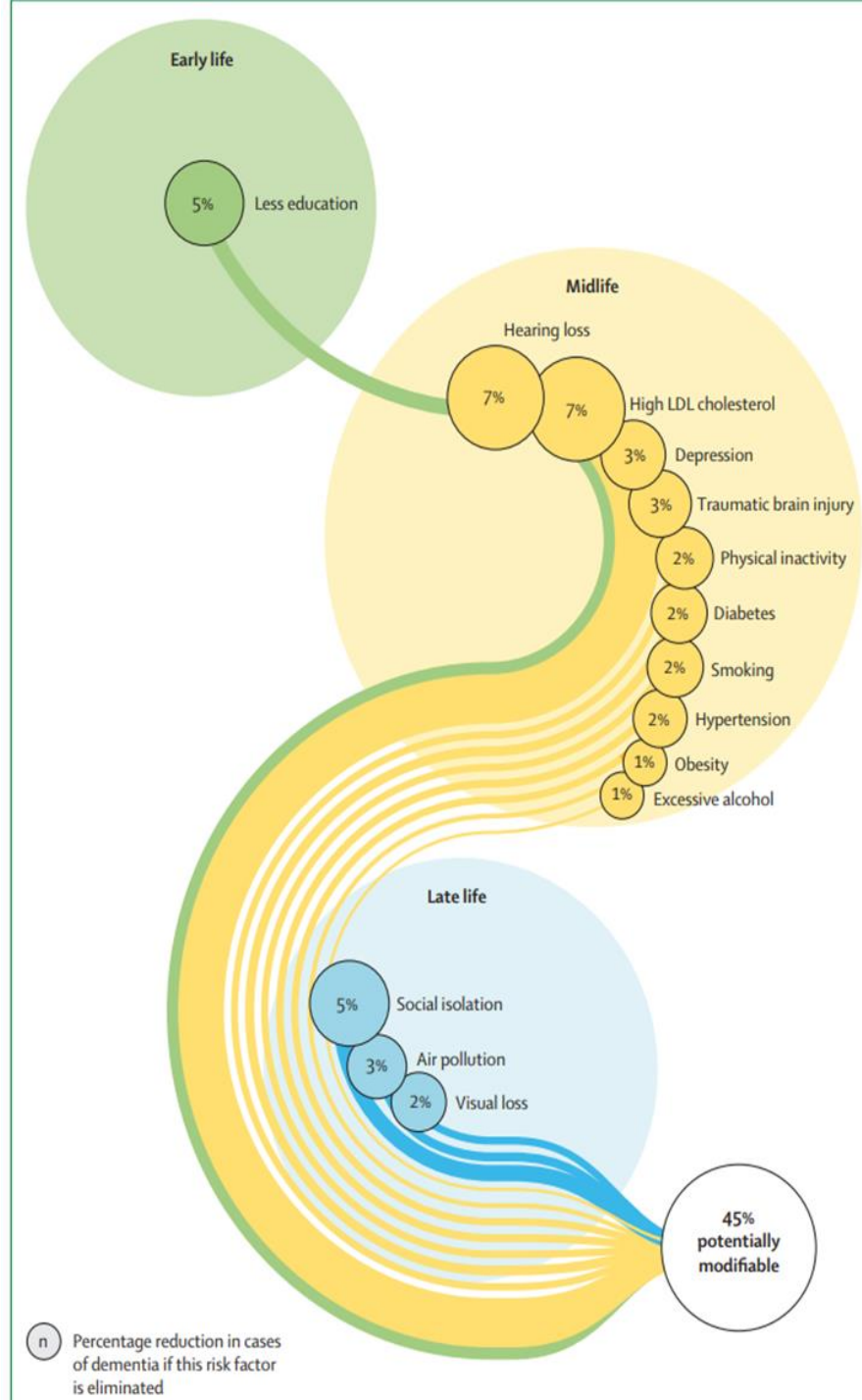
Social isolation

Air pollution

45 %



Livingston G. et al. 2024. Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the Lancet Standing Commission.





It's never too early nor too late in the life course for dementia prevention.

Livingstone et al. (2020)



PREVENTION OF DEMENTIA

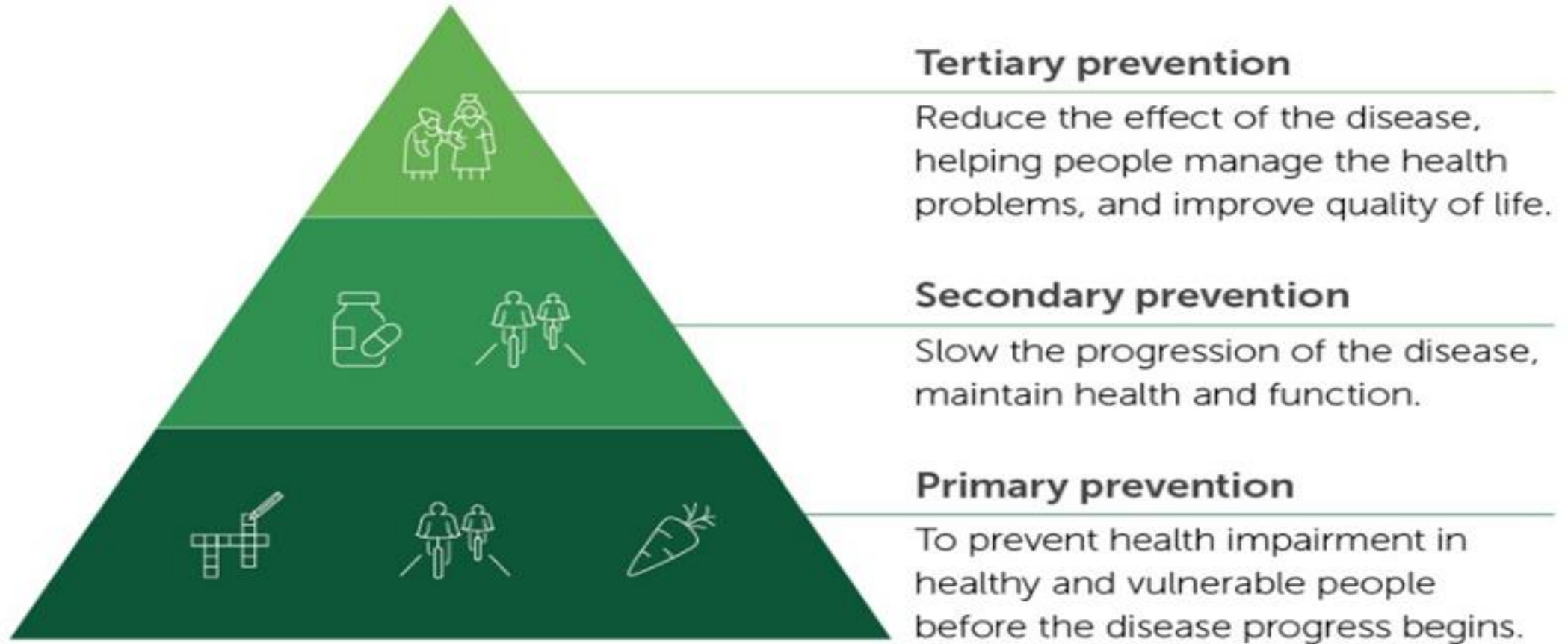


Figure designed by the Norwegian National Centre for Ageing and Health, Linn Lundsvoll/Grete Kjelvik, published in Dementia prevention in the Nordics (2024)



Public Health policy

None of the Nordic countries has used the evidence to set up a systematic Dementia prevention strategy as part of a NCD or Public Health strategy in a life course perspective.

- Iceland's dementioplan from 2020 explicitly mentions prevention as a focus area.
- The Swedish Board of Health and Welfare has compiled knowledge to prepare for a renewed dementia strategy in 2025. Prevention is one of the new focus areas.
- Finland has for a long time worked systematically with the FINGER-model focusing on the older adults – this work has been assigned by the Finnish government.



Legislation and regulation

Population-level prevention is targeting the risk-profile in the entire population. The mechanism is the change of social conditions and (unconscious) behavioral change.

Nordic examples:

- Educational system
- Regulation of alcohol and drinking
- Regulation of tobacco and smoking



Source: Dementia prevention in the Nordics, Nordic Welfare Centre (2024)

Implementation of practice

Recommendations in the report:

- Easy to make healthy choices for all
- Promoting Brain Health (Remember: What is good for the heart is also good for the brain.)
- Supporting cognitive functionality during the whole lifespan.



Source: Dementia prevention in the Nordics, Nordic Welfare Centre (2024)



Four key barriers/opportunities

1. Lack of knowledge in the public
2. Challenges reaching out with health information to vulnerable subgroups.
3. Competing health care system priorities
4. Lack of financing and resources for preventative initiatives



Raising awareness in the public

- Awareness Campaigns
- Public Health guidelines/information
- Lifestyle counselling

On the national or local level. Different actors and sectors involved.



High risk group for Dementia in early ages: People with Intellectual disabilities

- More recognition on this group if they are to receive optimal health promotive measures and care during the life-course. (Practice)
- Promoting healthy lifestyle like good education, physical activity, healthy food and social inclusion is important for people with ID and should not be forgotten. (Awareness and practice)
- Need of a comprehensive preventive and health promotive strategy for this vulnerable sub-group. (Policy)



Webinar on promoting Brain Health and preventing Dementia in people with Intellectual disabilities



<https://youtu.be/erzcxppdwVg>



The report Dementia prevention in the Nordics

- Conducted 2023-24 in close cooperation with The Norwegian National Centre for Ageing and Health, and the Nordic Welfare Centre.
- The mapping and writing of the report was undertaken by Grete Kjelvik at the Norwegian National Centre for Ageing and Health



Nordic-Baltic round table-meeting on Dementia Prevention

Nordic and Baltic experts met in Helsinki in January 2024 to explore and discuss the barriers and opportunities in Dementia Prevention and Health Promotion.

Baltic representatives:

Piret Purdelo Tomingas,
Estonia

Madara Saka, Latvia

Daina Mezecka, Latvia

Marius Ciurlionis, Lithuania



HM Queen Silvia of Sweden



Anna Tenje
Minister for Older People and Social Security, Sweden



Preventing Dementia in the Nordics: Evidence-based measures across the life course

In Stockholm, Sweden 4 September 2024

- The edited version of the online conference soon to be published on YouTube
- A digital conference report to be published on Nordic Welfare Centre's website:
<https://nordicwelfare.org/en/public-health/publikationer/>





All aboard. The key to success in dementia prevention is that everyone is rowing in the same direction.

Interviewee, Iceland 2023-2024



Thank you.

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