The outlook may be improving for millions of Americans who worry about being diagnosed with dementia. Two new studies discussed in a recent *New York Times* article suggest that contrary to popular opinion, the rate of individuals being diagnosed with dementia is slowing down.

As the baby boomer generation ages, many in the medical community believed that the number of individuals with dementia – Alzheimer’s specifically – is set to nearly double. This, they say, will have disastrous effects on an already overburdened health care system. However, these two new studies suggest that higher levels of education and better overall health may help keep those numbers (and costs) in check.

The first, a British study, found that the rate of dementia in people 65 years and older in England and Wales decreased 25% over the last 20 years. Researchers involved in the study believe these results will hold true in other, similarly developed nations. The second, a Danish study, compared cognitive test results between two groups of 90 years old who took the tests a decade apart. They found twice as many participants scored in the top percentile, and there was a marked decline in those whose scores put them in the “seriously impaired” category.

What accounts for these changes? Researchers believe that these studies prove what they’ve long hypothesized: that changes in education and overall health can reduce the incidence of dementia. Previous studies have shown that the incidence of dementia is generally lower among those with better education as well as those with better blood pressure and cholesterol levels. These two new studies help demonstrate the link between health, education, and dementia.

Before we can celebrate, keep in mind that the studies only looked at dementia as a whole, not Alzheimer’s (which is a form of dementia) specifically. There is still no guarantee that individuals will not eventually have to deal with this terrible disease. But, if we can take control of part of our destiny – keeping our wits sharp and our bodies healthy – then we can help shape it.
To read the full *New York Times* article, please [click here](#).