



News-Post photos by Imade Borha

Dr. Tabassum Majid speaks at "The Basics of Dementia."

## Dealing with dementia

### Event encourages compassionate care

By **IMADE BORHA**  
 iborha@newspost.com

"What's something that's not normal?" Dr. Tabassum Majid asked at "The Basics of Dementia." She spoke last week to the audience at Country Meadows of Frederick retirement community, which included caretakers and those who receive care. Majid encouraged attendees to guess if an instance occurred due to dementia. She advised that if a person has memory loss that disrupts daily function, this may be a sign that dementia is a factor.

Majid, director of research at the dementia research and education organization Integrate Institute at Copper Ridge, was a caregiver for her grandparents as a teen.

The symptoms of dementia, that Majid intimately knows, can look like other underlying issues.

"The first step is to eliminate everything else," Majid said. She cited that Urinary Tract Infection includes dementia-like symptoms of mood changes and confusion.

Other health conditions can also go undiagnosed if tests are taken during the time of the day when a person is most lucid.

"We had a lady who used to live in a community living cottage and every time she came to the dining room at night she would get faint, out of breath and she would get really confused and disoriented and not know her way home," Majid said. She ordered tests for this patient that occurred in the morning, but that was not when the patient was confused.

"It was just hypoxia," Majid continued, which is a condition where a person's oxygen levels are too low due to reasons like altitude or physical activity.

With more than 70 types of dementia, Majid said, finding the correct diagnosis of a loved one's cognitive decline can be a frustrating journey. The most common types of dementia include Alzheimer's which is caused by brain plaque and tangled nerve fibers, vascular dementias, which affects the brain's blood circulation, and Lewy body dementia, where protein build up called Lewy Bodies can cause symptoms such as hallu-



Dr. Tabassum Majid, Integrate Institute director of research, and Tracy Barnett, director of marketing and sales, with Debra L. Savageau, Country Meadows Retirement Communities director of marketing.

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Majid reassured the audience that dementia can be summed up by challenges with the 4 A's: amnesia (memory loss), aphasia (language processing), apraxia (co-ordination) and agnosia (recognition).

The challenge with these issues is that dementia is intimately linked to identity, Majid added. Those with dementia could have had skills in the area of their cognitive impairment.

"There was a gentleman who used to walk around and he would always go and try to open doors," Majid said. "He would check every single one of them, and go back to his room."

"Why do you think he was doing that?" Majid asked the audience. "As a security guard, he would go around and check all the doors ... He's looking for confirmation that his identity as a security guard is preserved."

Majid encouraged compassionate care, where caretakers ask their loved ones why they are doing a certain disoriented behavior, instead of immediately correcting the action. She promotes the principle of "Yes, and" where caretakers try to have a two-sided conversation to learn what their loved

one with dementia is thinking.

This person-centric care can be seen in the relationship of Ellen Berney and her husband, Frederic. They have been going to Integrate Institute events since 2014.

"I do have dementia, but I have high IQ. And I know what they're talking about," said Ellen, who is a retired registered nurse. She can remember treating people with the same dementia she has. Now, Ellen spends twice a week at Daybreak, an adult day service, to keep her mind sharp.

Going to Integrate Institute events help Ellen and Frederic get the education they need in their search to understand the type of dementia Ellen has. So far, Ellen has taken numerous brain scans.

In some cultures, speaking with doctors and utilizing long-term care like nursing homes are taboos. Majid, in a conversation after her event, said there are ways to ease family members into getting their loved one professional care. "We try to have support for people to honor that norm," Majid said of Integrate resources. "Now we have our Daybreak program, we have a social club, we even have a bistro that's a restaurant. ... Just take them out to eat."

## Why running can help older women

By **CAROLEE BELKIN WALKER**  
 The Washington Post

Just as some things in life get easier with age, inevitably, there are other things that get harder.

Important things, like regenerating bone density. It's not exactly the hottest new trend for looking and feeling young and healthy in our 50s, but it should be.

For many women, finding ways to regenerate bone density throughout our 20s and into our later years isn't always intuitive or even something we think much about.

That's when running, even into the postmenopause years, and other high-impact and weight-bearing forms of exercise can be crucial, says Ranit Mishori, a professor of family medicine at Georgetown University's School of Medicine.

Although women aren't considered to be in menopause until they've gone 12 months without a period, according to the National Institute on Aging, most women begin the transition to menopause between the ages of 45 and 55, and the process can last seven to 14 years.

That's because a key factor in menopause is the gradual decrease in some hormone levels, especially estrogen, Mishori says. Estrogen levels can drop so slowly that many women, distracted and busy with children at home and active in their careers, might not notice the changes until menopause or even postmenopause when symptoms such as hot flashes, weight gain and insomnia become most prominent.

We tend to think of our bones as, well, ossified, but they are living tissues that are constantly changing and growing, turning over cells, laying down new bone and removing old bone as part of the physiological process. By postmenopause, the balance shifts such that we remove old bone more quickly than we make new bone, leading to an overall reduction in body bone mass over time.

Our bodies build bone mass when we apply stress along the full length of our bones, which is what happens when we run, said sports medicine specialist and physical therapist Kevin McGuinness of Washington Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine. Bones build structure in response to the stresses applied to them, and for the weight-bearing bones, such as those in our legs and hips, you need to apply stresses while upright, working against gravity, in a weight-bearing fashion, he explained.

"The greater the stress, the greater the bone-building response," he said.

"For women, it is very important to build a base of strength and bone density in your 20s and 30s, because it becomes much harder to generate new bone in your 40s, 50s and 60s," McGuinness said. "Not that it's impossible to build it later in life, it's just more difficult."

## Minnesota skiers defy summer heat on giant indoor treadmill

By **RICHARD CHIN**  
 Star Tribune (Minneapolis) (TNS)

ARDEN HILLS, Minn. — On a recent balmy midsummer day, Shawn Ryan spent his lunch break downhill skiing in a warehouse in Arden Hills.

"You tell people in your office you're skiing on an 85-degree day," said Ryan, who works for 3M.

Ryan's ski season never has to end thanks to the Alpine Factory (thealpinefactory.com). The business consists of two massive downhill treadmills where skiers and snowboarders can carve turns on an endlessly rotating carpet of artificial snow in a climate-controlled environment.

The ski-hill-in-a-box is the creation of Jessica and Dan Par-

cheta, husband and wife ski instructors from Stillwater. They were introduced to the concept of an "infinite revolving slope" on ski trips to Austria and Argentina, where they met ski instructors from Holland.

Holland, as you probably know, is a flat country where the highest hill is only about 1,000 feet above sea level. But about 20 years ago, ski-loving Dutchmen created a way to simulate skiing on a big, tilted treadmill featuring a rotating belt of slick "ski grass" or "ski carpet," a synthetic mat similar to AstroTurf.

"We were skeptical about it at first," said Dan.

But the Parchetas, who have Level III certification with the Professional Ski Instructors of America, tried the treadmills in

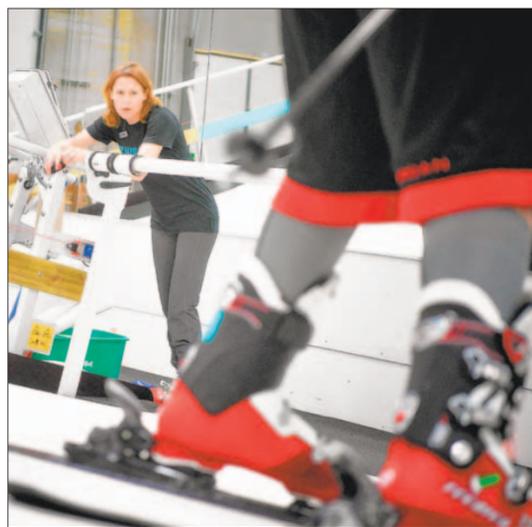
Holland about two years ago. "After you ski on it for a while, it's like, 'Yes, this is really skiing?'" Dan said.

The couple decided to import two of the treadmills and start a business catering to skiers who want to improve their skills or keep in shape during the off-season. They discovered that it also attracted people who've never skied and wanted to learn in a controlled environment.

Colorado, Florida and California have treadmill skiing centers, but the Alpine Factory, which opened in January, is the first of its kind in the Midwest, according to Dan.

Each treadmill has a skiable surface of about 20 by 40 feet and

(See **SKIERS D2**)



Alpine Factory owner Jessica Parcheta helps Bret Larson with his form on the fast-moving slope on July 6 at Alpine Factory in Arden Hills, Minn.

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