**Who are you?**

By Millie and Jessica.

Vascular dementia is a progressive illness which means that it will worsen over time. This type of dementia is caused by a lack of oxygen reaching the brain. Although each individual will experience dementia differently on average people with vascular dementia live for around five years after symptoms begin, less than the average for Alzheimer’s disease. Do not be alarmed! This vicious memory taking monster cannot be inherited but unfortunately it is incurable and this can be emotionally distressing when processing. Although this form of dementia is not as widely recognised, up to 20% of the cases have a vascular cause making it the second most common cause of dementia after Alzheimer’s disease.

There is no cure but improving and changing lifestyle choices can slow down the progression of this brutal killer! Lifestyle changes are the positive adaptations to an individual’s everyday life such as to have a change in diet to become more balanced and healthier, for example including your five-a-day. This helps to control a high blood pressure, blood sugar levels and cholesterol levels. To coincide with a healthy diet an individual must ensure that they are physically active, including 90 minutes of vigorous aerobic exercise. Changing lifestyle choices may include stopping smoking and controlling alcohol intake to stick to the 14 units per week guideline.

Caring for someone with dementia can be challenging and stressful, but with the right support it can be rewarding and often satisfying. Seeing a loved one pass through the stages of vascular dementia is a tormenting and challenging time but it is important to monitor the symptoms that they may face. These symptoms may include coo-key concentration problems, which in tales losing interest in what’s happening around you. Monstrous mood and prominent personality changes, such as feeling irritable or low and down. Torrential trouble in completing tough tasks this includes daily trials that would normally be simple.

We have spoken to a member of our school society whose family member suffers with mixed dementia, which is a combination of Alzheimer’s and vascular dementia forms, and this is what she has to say, “even though watching this progression is an increasingly difficult feat there are glimmers of light and happiness found in humour and the memories people keep.”

**Who can help?**

If you know of anyone or notice any changes in behaviour in family and friends around you please contact the following healthcare professionals for more information. These are social services, charities devoted to dementia, private care and support services, and heart helpline on 03003303311 between Monday – Friday at 9am – 5pm. This is estimated to effect around 150,000 people in the UK and so it is important for us as a country to identify the very real effects of this illness.

