Gait Plate Technology can be an indicator of Alzheimer's Disease
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Did you know that the way you walk can be an indicator for Alzheimer’s disease? New research shows that gait abnormalities or changes in walking often appear before a cognitive decline is apparent. Monitoring and tracking ambulation has now been proven to assist in the early diagnosis of apraxia (decrease or loss of lower limb control) by providing clues into brain functioning.

Walking is complex and requires the parts of the brain to process stimuli and integrate this information perfectly. Alzheimer’s interferes with the intricate circuitry of the brain resulting in walking difficulties. Apraxia, the loss of the ability to use the lower limbs to walk, results in slow, irregular gait, difficulty in rising from a seated position and difficulty in manoeuvring around obstacles and turns. New research, using gait plate technology, has linked decreases in cadence and stride length with declines in cognitive function and memory.

“This finding would support the possible role of gait changes as an early predictor of cognitive impairment.”

Monitoring any changes in gait is often an easy, affordable way for doctors (and even family members) to detect possible Alzheimer’s and doesn’t require endless hours of testing or expensive technology; after which advanced testing can proceed. Computerised gait technology was successfully used by researchers in the US to link a decrease in cadence, velocity and stride length to declines in global cognition and memory. In South Africa, the implications are huge. By monitoring gait changes, early detection of possible Alzheimer’s and other cognitive impairment becomes much easier for nurses and caregivers.
References:

2. Gait Changes May Signal Cognitive Decline, Presage Alzheimers, C. Paddock