

## **Lifebrain public lecture-26<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, University of Cambridge**

### **Presentation 1 – Isabelle Budin Ljøsne, PhD, Senior Researcher, Norwegian Institute of Public Health**

#### **What is brain health?**

In Lifebrain we are interested in how people think about their brain health. Brain health is a new term used to describe your ability to remember, learn, play, concentrate, and handle challenges. It is also about your ability to be mentally and emotionally in balance. Simply said, brain health is about making the most of your brain and taking care of it. (Source: National Institutes of Health, USA).

We had interviewed 44 brain research participants in Oslo, Oxford, Barcelona and Berlin and our questions to them were: Is the brain something you think about? Are you worried about it? Do you do anything in particular for your brain? Are you willing to do more for your brain health?

Understanding these attitudes and perceptions help us to propose public policy guidelines so that people can take better care of their brain health.

#### **So what do people think about their brain health?**

*Are cognitive functions more recognized than mental health?*

People refer mostly to cognitive health when they talk about their brain, mostly memory.

*Brain health taken for granted*

People take brain health for granted: most people, if they have a healthy brain, do not think about their brain.

*Brain health paradox*

People are quite aware of what is beneficial for their brain. However, they do little for their brain health, and their focus is more on general health and well-being.

*Great interest in brain health tests*

People are interested in taking brain health tests to learn more about their brain health and risk of developing a brain disease, though they are less open to hear about the risks for developing a non-preventable disease

*Personalised support is needed*

People need personalised information on what they need to do specifically in order to improve their brain health.

*Need to have more scientific evidences on the impacts of lifestyle changes*

People would like to know if they do something for their brain health that has a real impact, so they need more scientific evidences.

*A Global Brain Health Survey will be launched in 2019.*

We would like to hear the views of even more people, so we launch a Global Brain Health Survey online in the summer of 2019, in 10 languages. This will be available on the Lifebrain website at [www.lifebrain.uio.no](http://www.lifebrain.uio.no).