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"We need recognition of dementia as a national health priority"

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India is at a crucial juncture in eldercare. Nearly 8.8 million elderly Indians live with dementia, a number projected to almost double to 17 million by 2036. Yet, more than 90% of cases remain undiagnosed, leaving families struggling in silence. Many mistake dementia for "normal ageing" leading to delayed help, while caregivers often feel overwhelmed in a system with no national dementia policy and very few dedicated memory care facilities outside major cities. Against this backdrop, Epoch Elder Care, India's leading expert in assisted living and dementia care, has opened its newest facility, Epoch Monet House, in Pune on 15th September 2025. To find out more about this new facility, BioSpectrum spoke to Neha Sinha, Dementia Specialist, CEO & Co-Founder of Epoch Elder Care.



What is the new dementia and Alzheimer's care facility in Pune all about, and what makes it special? How much has been invested in this new facility?

Our investment in elder care technology goes beyond financial commitment; it is deeply rooted in empathy and a genuine understanding of the needs of our elders. We see technology not just as a tool, but as an enabler of dignity, comfort, and independence. Whether it is through smart monitoring, cognitive engagement tools, or personalized care platforms, we are invested in integrating technology that truly enhances quality of life.

But for us, elder care is not only about technology; it is equally about the people, the environment, and the philosophy of care we provide. We invested in building compassionate care teams, creating safe and nurturing spaces, and fostering emotional well-being. This also extends to developing senior-friendly assets and infrastructure that are accessible, safe, and thoughtfully designed to meet their physical and emotional needs. Our approach is to balance innovation with the human touch, ensuring that every elder feels safe, respected, and cared for. Being invested in elder care, therefore, means combining empathy with cutting-edge solutions, age-appropriate infrastructure, and everyday kindness.

Are you using any new treatments, therapies, or technology to care for people with dementia and Alzheimer's?

Advancements in dementia care must begin with a deeper understanding of the disease. While India awaits the approval of disease-modifying drugs such as **Lecanemab**, we remain far behind in basic awareness around dementia management, awareness that can significantly improve quality of life for those affected.

At Epoch, we believe in managing dementia not just as a clinical condition but through **holistic, person-centered care**. Beyond the role of neurologists and medical specialists, dementia care requires the involvement of mental health support, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, as well as cognitive and sensory stimulation. Social engagement and meaningful activities also form an integral part of this approach.

We are investing in designing **dementia-friendly spaces** that enable independence and safety, exploring physiotherapy enhanced with tools such as VR, and fostering greater community participation. These steps ensure that care is not only clinical but also dignified, engaging, and deeply supportive of an elder's overall well-being.

Will you be working with Pune's hospitals, doctors, or research institutes for this centre?

Yes, care cannot happen in isolation. We are already building bridges with Pune's medical community, hospitals, and specialists. Our approach is to complement, not compete, doctors treat the illness, but we nurture the person living with it. Research partnerships excite us too, because India needs more data, more understanding, and more awareness around dementia.

What are your future plans for opening similar centres in other cities?

We go where the need is. Number of dementia cases is growing in India- with 8.8 elders with dementia, and families are looking for trustworthy care. Our future is not about speed but about depth; each new home must reflect Epoch's values and quality. Yes, we will expand to more cities, but carefully, making sure every elder in our care experiences the same trust, dignity, and joy as the very first resident we ever welcomed.

How does Epoch Elder Care see the role of specialised dementia and Alzheimer's facilities evolving in India over the next decade, and what are your plans to contribute to this change?

India is waking up to the reality of dementia. For decades, families carried the entire burden at home, often silently. Over the next decade, specialised facilities will not be a luxury, but a necessity. I see a future where dementia care is as natural a part of healthcare as cardiology or oncology. Epoch's role is to lead that shift by showing that care can be clinically robust and deeply human at the same time.

What are the views on the current challenges facing the dementia and Alzheimer's healthcare market in India? Are there any global lessons to be learnt to address those challenges?

The challenges are many: stigma of seeking professional help, lack of trained professionals and caregivers, and still little awareness about how it is differentiated from age-related issues. Families often don't even use the word "dementia." And would try to normalise symptoms.

Globally, we've seen that early diagnosis, specialised training, and community awareness make all the difference. India can learn from that, but we must also create solutions that respect our culture, joint families, and caregiving traditions. We cannot just import models; we must build our own.

Do you have any expectations from the government to ensure better healthcare management in this sector?

Yes, absolutely. Dementia is not just a medical issue; it is a social one. We need recognition of dementia as a national health priority, more training programmes, and clear policies that support families and care providers. Subsidies for long-term care, insurance coverage, and caregiver training & recognition can transform how India looks after its elderly. The increased attention from policymakers towards dementia is a step in the right direction, and collaboration with the private sector will only strengthen these efforts.

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