Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia among older adults. It is progressive, irreversible, and affects memory and thinking. Scientists do not fully understand what causes Alzheimer's, but they suspect a combination of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. Previous studies have shown that pollution affects how the brain grows and develops, so it is possible that it factors into how Alzheimer's progresses.

**EFFECTS OF POLLUTION**
Air pollution has been linked to an increased incidence of cancer, heart disease, stroke and asthma as well as short-term problems such as eye irritation, sneezing and coughing, dizziness, and headaches.

**ALZHEIMER'S SEVERITY**
Alzheimer's disease is currently ranked as the SIXTH leading cause of death in the United States.

**MY RESEARCH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE**
This summer I have been studying a possible connection between diesel exhaust particles, representing pollution, and people who are susceptible to Alzheimer's disease. Our theory is that an at-risk population may have an earlier onset of Alzheimer's and worse symptoms if they are exposed to pollution. If there is a link between the two, this could lead to the development of more effective prevention strategies to limit the harmful effects of air pollution.