

The Kathleen Winn Interviews of Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik highlight a Fierce Advocate for Alzheimer's Treatments

In the 1030 KVOI The Voice program with Kathleen Winn, Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik presented stunning new developments in the treatment of Alzheimer's.

TUCSON, AZ, UNITED STATES, January 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kathleen Winn, host of the Winn Tucson show on 1030 KVOI, has recently interviewed neurologist [Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik](#) not once, but twice about her insights into Alzheimer's Disease (AD), most recently on January 15, 2025. See <https://www.kvoi.com/onair/winn-tucson>



Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik, Vita Medica Institute, Tucson, Arizona

Radio personality Kathleen Winn is well-known in Arizona. She previously served as an at-large member of the Maricopa County Community College District in Arizona and, in 2024, ran for Arizona's Congressional District 6.

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My goal is to continue to push the boundaries of neurological research ... Alzheimer's disease is a challenging condition, but ... we can make a significant impact on the lives of those affected ...”

Neurologist Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik

Dr. de Leonni's interviews on the show highlight her exceptional contributions to neurology, particularly [dementia](#), her service to the community, and her dedication to advancing research and treatment options. Alzheimer's affects approximately 6 percent of all people aged 65 and older and is the most common cause of dementia. The exact cause of Alzheimer's has not yet been determined. According to current scientific opinion, it is caused by an abnormal build-up of proteins in and around

brain cells. As the FDA approves new drugs to mitigate the effects of this debilitating disease, Dr.

de Leonni Stanonik emphasizes a comprehensive approach that includes lifestyle modifications.

Ms. Winn noted that dementia is one of the biggest health crises of the 21st century. There are more than 55 million people worldwide living with dementia. This number will grow to 139 million by the year 2050. Alzheimer's dementia is the most common cause of all dementias and is thought to account for 60-80% of all global dementia cases. Apart from the personal tragedies resulting from dementia cases, the financial burden on society is staggering. The estimated total worldwide cost of dementia is currently over US\$1.3 trillion and is expected to increase to US\$ 2.8 trillion by 2030. See <https://www.alzint.org/about/dementia-facts-figures/dementia-statistics/>

Dr. de Leonni has made significant advances in understanding and treating neurological conditions. In the interviews, she provides an insightful overview of Alzheimer's treatment options and, most importantly, offers hope and guidance to patients and their families. "I am so honored to have the opportunity to share my experiences with the community," said Dr. de Leonni. "My goal is to continue to push the boundaries of neurological research and provide the best possible care for my patients. Alzheimer's disease is a challenging condition, but with continued research and advancements in treatment, we can make a significant impact on the lives of those affected."

Dr. de Leonni explained that we are experiencing a paradigm shift in diagnosing and treating Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. New findings indicate that AD is a serological disease which, if detected early, can be slowed down, and potentially even cured. In addition to the latest Alzheimer's medications, there are new approaches to lifestyle intervention.



Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik, Vita Medica Institute, Tucson, Arizona

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Mateja de Leonni Stanonik, M.D., M.A., Ph.D.
Vita Medica Institute

Dr. de Leonni Stanonik started the Vita Medica Institute (VMI) four years ago to provide Neurology, Vascular Neurology, Neurodiagnostics and Pain Management services in Tucson. VMI is the only Arizona practice that also focuses on Women's Neurology and offers Concierge Neurology services, as well as extensive expertise in developing Teleneurology and Telepsychiatry systems. Recently, minimally invasive neurosurgical endovascular neuro-interventional expertise was added to the spectrum of treatments. The office encompasses three new providers. Dr. de Leonni held the position of Surgeon General of Republic of Slovenia for the years 2010-2012 and was named 2016 Outstanding Neurologist of the Year by *Inside Tucson Business* and *Tucson Local Media*. In addition, in 2018 she was appointed honorary commander for the 355th Medical Squadron, Davis-Mountain Air Force Base. Dr. de Leonni Stanonik is active in both regional and national divisions of the American Stroke Association/American Heart Association, Society of Vascular and Interventional Neurology as well as the Alzheimer's Association, Desert Southwest Chapter.

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Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik in Tucson Lifestyle Magazine.

The approval of new Alzheimer's drugs marks a significant milestone in the fight against this neurodegenerative disease. New medications, such as lecanemab and aducanumab (discontinued by the manufacturer in 2024), target the amyloid plaques in the brain that are characteristic of Alzheimer's. An encouraging clinical trial evaluated a new drug, LM11A-31, to possibly increase the brain's resilience to Alzheimer-driven changes. See

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-05-results-human-clinical-trial-early.html>.

There are also ongoing clinical studies in Europe and elsewhere where significant lifestyle changes can reverse memory loss in dementia. This is compelling new information that has never been elucidated before.

While drugs like these offer hope by potentially slowing the progression of the disease, Dr. de Leonni Stanonik cautions that they are not necessarily a cure. "These treatments are a step in the right direction, but we must manage expectations. They can slow down the progression and arrest the disease process," she states. Hence, seeking help early when patients can still function independently is paramount.

Dr. de Leonni Stanonik advocates a holistic approach to managing Alzheimer's, combining pharmacological treatments with lifestyle interventions. "There's growing evidence that lifestyle changes can significantly impact the course of Alzheimer's," she notes. Research has shown that diet, physical activity, cognitive engagement, and social interaction can be crucial to brain health."



THE FACE OF Alzheimer's Treatment

Vita Medica Institute
Mateja de Leonni Stanonik, M.D., MA, Ph.D.

Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik (former Surgeon General of the Republic of Slovenia) is the head of Tucson's multidisciplinary neurology and pain management clinic, the Vita Medica Institute. The focus of her current practice is Excellence in Alzheimer's disease treatments as she is the first neurologist in Arizona who has extensive experience in the use of the new Alzheimer's biology medications which remove beta amyloid plaques. With a rich background in both clinical practice and academic research, Dr. de Leonni Stanonik is working in the evolving landscape of Alzheimer's treatment. A disease that affects approximately 6 percent of all people aged 65 and older, Alzheimer's Disease is the most common cause of dementia. The exact cause of the condition is elusive, but according to current scientific opinions, it is caused by an abnormal build-up of proteins

(known as amyloid plaques) in and around brain cells. The FDA is continually working on getting new drugs approved that are aimed at mitigating the effects of this debilitating disease, but Dr. de Leonni Stanonik emphasizes a holistic approach that also includes lifestyle interventions.

Although these Alzheimer's drugs offer hope by potentially slowing the progression of the disease, they are not a cure. "These treatments are a step in the right direction, but we must manage expectations," Dr. de Leonni Stanonik explains. "They can slow down the progression, but do not reverse the damage already done. There is growing evidence that lifestyle factors such as diet, physical activity, cognitive engagement and social interaction can play a crucial role in brain health." She points to the Mediterranean diet as particularly beneficial, as is physical exercise to support growth of new brain cells and improve mood.

Finally, Dr. de Leonni Stanonik cautions that "in all medical matters, one should not act based solely on information found on the internet, but instead review the issues with the medical doctor who has the patient's medical history and has personally examined the patient."

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Tucson Lifestyle magazine featured Dr Mateja de Leonni Stanonik



Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik at the Vita Medica Institute in Tucson, Arizona.

See recent reports on CNN, "Signs of Alzheimer's were everywhere. Then his brain improved," <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/18/health/alzheimers-blood-brain-improvement-wellness/index.html> & "An Alzheimer's patient says intensive lifestyle changes reversed her condition," <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/16/health/video/gupta-alzheimers-reversed-patient-digvid>

One of the most compelling areas of lifestyle intervention is diet. Dr. de Leonni Stanonik points to the Mediterranean diet, which is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats, as particularly beneficial. Studies suggest that this diet can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and improve cognitive function. "Nutrition is fundamental. What we eat can affect our brain health profoundly. My advice is to avoid ultra-processed foods," she notes.

Physical exercise is another critical component. Regular physical activity has been shown to improve cardiovascular health and support brain function. Exercise can also promote the growth of new brain cells and improve mood, both of which are important for those with Alzheimer's. "Even moderate exercise, like walking or swimming, can make a difference," Dr. de Leonni Stanonik advises.

Cognitive engagement is also essential. Activities challenging the brain, such as puzzles, reading, or learning new skills, can help maintain cognitive function. "The brain thrives on being challenged. Keeping it active can delay the onset of symptoms," she explains.

Social interaction plays a vital role in mental health as well. Isolation can exacerbate Alzheimer's symptoms, while staying socially active can provide emotional support and stimulate cognitive function. "Human connection is powerful. Social activities can help keep the mind sharp and improve the quality of life for those with Alzheimer's," Dr. de Leonni Stanonik says.

In her commentary, Dr. de Leonni Stanonik underscores the importance of personalized care. "Alzheimer's affects each person differently, and treatment plans should be tailored to the individual's needs. A combination of medication, lifestyle changes, and supportive care is often the most effective approach."

Concludes Dr. de Leonni: "The era where we could not do anything for Alzheimer's patients is over. The disease may have become reversible." However, Dr. de Leonni Stanonik cautions that "in all medical matters, one should not act based solely on information found on the internet but instead review the issues with the medical doctor who has the patient's medical history and has personally examined the patient."

About Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik

Dr. Mateja de Leonni Stanonik, MD, MA, PhD (former Surgeon General of the Republic of Slovenia) heads a multidisciplinary Neurology and Psychiatry Clinic, the Vita Medica Institute, in Tucson, Arizona. The focus of her current neurology practice is Alzheimer's Disease,

stroke/vascular neurology, and other neurological disorders.

Dr. de Leonni completed her undergraduate degrees in Biology and Psychology (BSc.), as well as in German and Political Science (B.A.). She obtained her master's degree in Cognitive Psychology/Neurolinguistics and Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Neuroscience, focusing on Alzheimer's disease. In 2007, she completed her M.D. degree at the Saba University School of Medicine and a medical residency in Neurology at George Washington University. She has further fellowship training in vascular/stroke neurology and neuro-interventions.

Dr. de Leonni Stanonik is passionate about preserving brain health well into the golden years of life, which allows patients to maintain their quality of life as much as possible.

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