

IIT develops technology to spot dementia before symptoms appear

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Scientists at IIT Gandhinagar have developed a tool which will prove to be a big boon to patients suffering with dementia.

The technology will diagnose dementia non-invasively by just tracking a person's eye movements, before the even symptoms appear.

Responding about the technology, Uttama Lahiri, Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar, said: "By the time symptoms of dementia are detected, it is too late — Alzheimer's disease kicks in and it can not be managed. But if dementia is caught early, we can delay the progression of Alzheimer's".

The 'MindEye' project can track a person's eye movement, quantifying gaze in terms of reaction time and correct fixations, in response to visual stimuli presented on computer monitor.

"We present a stimulus — dots appearing at certain portions of the screen at certain angles. People with dementia often have issues with following the dot or fixing their gaze," Lahiri said.

Researchers can then map the eye movements in response to the stimulus. They can identify subtle patterns that predict whether the person suffers from mild cognitive impairment.

"We have handed the technology over to the industry and a larger clinical trial is under way in Kolkata and Gujarat," Lahiri said.

