

## **Beware bogus brain boosters**

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, one in four over the age of 50 takes a brain supplement, despite the fact that they are likely only flushing their money down the drain!

Why would we do this? Sadly, because opportunists in the darker corners of our health care industry prey on our fear and misunderstanding about Alzheimer's disease and other causes of dementia. When asked what disease seniors fear most, respondents to an AARP survey named Alzheimer's disease their greatest fear. As a cause for concern, it ranks above cancer, stroke, and heart disease, in that order. As a result, some readily buy supplements, pills, and other products that claim to improve and protect our brain.

This is no small problem. Such products amount to a \$3 billion-dollar industry according to a study conducted by the AARP Global Council on Brain Health, and this expenditure is expected to double by 2023 as our senior population continues to grow. The study concluded that "scientific evidence does not support the use of any supplement to prevent, slow, reverse, or stop cognitive decline, dementia, or other related neurological disease such as Alzheimer's," and that use of such products are a "massive waste of money."

In addition, these products do not fall under the laws that regulate our prescription medications. No federal agency tests supplements and herbal remedies through clinical trials, verifies that they meet medical claims, or verifies their purity or dosage. All we know about them is what their manufacturers and marketers tell us, and, according to the AARP, it is simply not to be believed.

*Debbie Selsavage is a Certified Independent Trainer in the Positive Approach to Care, a Certified Dementia Practitioner, and President of the Board of Directors of the Alzheimer's Family Organization. Her company, Coping with Dementia LLC, is dedicated to making life better for individuals and their caregivers who are living with dementia. Contact Debbie at [deb@coping.today](mailto:deb@coping.today).*