

## **Fend Off Dementia with Sex Crosswords and a Run**

CANBERRA (Reuters) - Sex, cryptic crosswords and a good run could help ward off dementia and other degenerative conditions by stimulating new brain cells, an Australian researcher said on Thursday.

Perry Bartlett, a professor at the University of Queensland's Brain Institute, said mental and physical exercise helped create and nurture new nerve cells in the brain, keeping it functional and warding off diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

"Perhaps one should run a long distance and do the cryptic crossword, " Bartlett told Australian radio.

He said a chemical called prolactin appeared to promote new cells in the brain and could be found in high levels in pregnant women.

"Prolactin levels also go up during sex as well. So one could think of a number of more entertaining activities than running in order to regulate the production of nerve cells," Bartlett said.