

Mark Hatzer and Mother Sylvia - April 2018

WHEN his mother Sylvia's dementia became so severe she had to be kept in hospital for her own safety, Mark Hatzer thought he had lost her. But just a year later he claims his mother has seen a remarkable improvement - thanks a to a diet high in nuts and berries. The Mediterranean diet focused on Brazil nuts, walnuts and blueberries, had a dramatic impact on 82-year-old Mrs Hatzer's condition. Mr Hatzer, 50, first noticed his mother's forgetfulness three years ago. She would struggle to remember birthdays or arrangements, and in December 2016 was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She suffered a rapid deterioration and the following March was admitted to North Manchester General Hospital after a seizure and a fall. To her son's dismay she no longer recognised him, and medics asked if she could be sectioned after she accused staff of kidnapping her. But one year later Mrs Hatzer is back at home in Prestwich and is unrecognisable from the woman in hospital.



Her son claims a large part of the transformation is down to the diet and recipes they devised together, containing walnuts, blueberries and other brain-boosting foods. Having decided that medication was in itself was not enough, they took inspiration from the fact that rates of dementia are far lower in Mediterranean countries. Following the adoption of a Mediterranean diet, Mrs Hatzer can remember birthdays once more, goes to tea dances and can carry out much of her own care needs. It is an example of how the disease can be - if not be completely beaten - then arrested significantly. Mr Hatzer, whose father died in 1987, said: 'When my mum was in hospital she didn't recognise me and phoned the police as she thought she'd been

kidnapped...When she left hospital I thought instead of prescribed medication... we'd perhaps try an alternative treatment. In certain countries Alzheimer's is virtually unheard of because of their diet. 'Everyone knows about fish but there is also blueberries, strawberries, Brazil nuts and walnuts -these are apparently shaped like a brain to give us a sign that they are good for the brain.' Other foods Mrs Hatzer began incorporating include broccoli, kale, sunflower seeds, oats, sweet potatoes and dark chocolate. Other steps included cognitive exercises such as jigsaws and cross words, meeting people at social groups and a pedalling device so Mrs Hatzer could exercise in her chair. Mr Hatzer, a lawyer, said: 'It wasn't an overnight miracle but after a couple of months she began remembering things like birthdays and was becoming her old self again, more alert, more engaged. People think that once you get a diagnosis your life is at an end...but it doesn't have to be.'