

DEMENTIA OVERVIEW

Dementia is Not a Specific Disease; it is an Overall Term that Describes a Wide Range of Symptoms

There are More than 3 Million cases of Dementia per year, most frequently stemming from Alzheimer's disease

Dementia isn't a specific disease. Instead, dementia describes a group of symptoms affecting memory, thinking and social abilities; severely enough to interfere with daily functioning. Though dementia generally involves memory loss, memory loss has different causes, thus memory loss alone doesn't mean you have dementia. Dementia involves damage of nerve cells in the brain, which can occur in several areas of the brain. The damage affects people differently, depending on the area of the brain affected.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of dementia symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.

01 | Symptoms

Treatable medical conditions can cause dementia symptoms, it is important to determine the underlying cause. Dementia symptoms vary depending on the cause, common signs and symptoms include:

- Memory loss, which is usually noticed by a spouse or someone else
- Difficulty communicating or finding words
- Difficulty reasoning or problem-solving
- Difficulty handling complex tasks
- Difficulty with planning and organizing
- Difficulty with coordination and motor functions
- Confusion and disorientation
- Personality changes
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Inappropriate behavior
- Paranoia
- Agitation
- Hallucination

02 | Diagnosis

Diagnosing dementia and determining the type can be challenging. A diagnosis of dementia requires that at least two core mental functions be impaired enough to interfere with daily living. They are memory, language skills, ability to focus and pay attention, ability to reason and problem-solve, and visual perception. No single test can diagnose dementia; doctors must conduct a number of tests in order to come to a more definitive result. Cognitive tests, neuropsychological tests, brain scans, psychiatric evaluations and lab tests all aid in the diagnosis of dementia.

03 | Treatment

Dementia cannot be cured, however symptoms can be managed. Medications can temporarily improve symptoms by boosting chemical messengers in the brain allowing for better brain function. Some medications can treat depression, insomnia or anxiety. Occupational therapy, modifying the environment and modifying tasks can be implemented to help reduce accidents, clutter, noise and other distractions or activities that could become troublesome and dangerous for patients. To promote relaxation in patients some therapies that have been proven successful for those with dementia include; pet therapy, aroma therapy, massages therapy, art therapy and music therapy.

For more information on dementia and other neurological conditions, please visit:

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>

***Did You Know?
Dementia is a leading cause
of death***

References

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dementia/home/ovc-20198502>

<http://www.alz.org/what-is-dementia.asp> <http://www.healthline.com/health/dementia/stages>