



FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR IF YOU NOTICE ANY SIGNS THAT MIGHT BE SUGGESTIVE OF DEMENTIA, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTHCARE TEAM. THEY CAN ASSIST WITH PROPER DIAGNOSIS, RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES.

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Dementia

For patients and visitors

We make it possible.

What is dementia?

DEMENTIA is a term used to describe a group of symptoms, including memory loss, impaired judgment, disorientation and behavioural changes that are severe enough to cause loss of function.

Dementia results from the degeneration of brain function and may eventually affect daily activities. Dementia is more common in the elderly.

SCREENING AND DIAGNOSIS

1) Causes that must be ruled out:

- Delirium
- Depression
- Alcohol
- Hypothyroid
- Drug side effects (including over-the-counter medications/herbals)
- Significant hearing/vision problem
- Recent head injury/fall

2) The assessment of dementia is holistic.

Information is gathered from the patient's medical history, family member observations, cognitive and physical assessments, lab tests and Computer Tomography (CT) scan if indicated.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO DIAGNOSE THE TYPE OF DEMENTIA?

- Different diagnosis
- Different prognosis
- Different treatment

UNAVOIDABLE RISK FACTORS

- Age:
 - <65 years: 1%
 - 65 years: 2%
 - 70 years: 4%
 - 75 years: 8%
 - 80 years: 16%
 - 85 years: 32%
 - 90-94 years: 38%
- Family history: risk doubles for each first degree relative
- Previous cerebrovascular accident/myocardial infarction

MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

Risk doubles for every vascular risk factor:

- Atrial fibrillation
- Diabetes
- Heart disease/myocardial infarction/coronary artery disease
- Hyperlipidemia
- Hypertension
- Stroke
- Obesity
- Smoking

DEMENTIA EARLY WARNING SYMPTOMS

Caregiver observations:

- Difficulty performing familiar tasks.
- Problems with language.
- Disorientation.
- Poor judgment.
- Problems with abstract thinking.
- Misplacing things.
- Changes in mood and behaviour.
- Changes in personality.
- Loss of initiative.
- Memory loss affecting day-to-day activities.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Some causes of dementia are potentially reversible. While there is presently no cure for certain types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's and Vascular Dementia, there are medications available to alleviate symptoms and enhance quality of life.

Treatments include:

- Individualized care plan.
- Medication.
- Behavioural and cognitive therapy.
- Education to improve care for patients with dementia and their families.

Benefits of treatment:

- Improved emotional, social and physical functioning.
- Improved quality of life.
- Enhanced involvement in care delivery.