

DIFFERENT TYPES OF DEMENTIA

There are about 120+ different underlying causes of Dementia. Remember, Dementia is not a disease in and of itself. Dementia is a collection of symptoms (aka Syndrome) which present due to an underlying disease process. Here are some of the most common causes of Dementia Syndrome:

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: Accounts for about 2/3 of Dementia diagnoses. Symptoms may include loss of recent memories and loss of capacity to store new memories; problems with language and some forms of Aphasia; Disorientation to time, place, or situations; loss of social inhibitions. As the disease process progresses you may observe loss of continence; loss of more distant memories; loss of safety awareness, and a decline in Reflex (muscle) memory (ie: swallowing difficulties, ambulation)

VASCULAR DEMENTIA: Usually occurs post stroke or cardiac event which caused disturbance of oxygen to the brain or damage to brain tissue. Can also be caused by poor dietary or lifestyle choices, leading to problems with arteries and blood vessels. Some common symptoms are emotional and energy shifts (ie: good days and not so good days), judgment and behavior are not as reliable as pre-condition though abilities may remain stable for a while with an acute downward shift at times. These downward shifts may rectify afterwards, though this does not mean the condition is reversing. The outward symptoms and behaviors will vary quite a bit from person to person depending on the severity of the cause of disease onset. Issues with speech and movement are common post stroke depending on which areas of the brain have been affected and severity of the event.

FRONTO-TEMPORAL LOBE DEMENTIA: This type of Dementia is often thought of as most challenging as it affects the Frontal Lobe of the brain which is responsible for reasoning, forward thinking, regulating "flight or fight" stimuli (does this in response to messaging from the Primal Brain), and social awareness/inhibitions. This, coupled with damage to the Temporal Lobe which is responsible for hearing, word processing, vocabulary and memory storage may often lead to misinterpretation of sounds and situations with accompanying responses which are out of proportion to the actual situation.

LEWY BODY DEMENTIA: Lewy Body Dementia is sometimes mis-diagnosed as Parkinson's Disease, in that the two diseases share some similar symptoms. Both have

a mutation to the alpha-synuclein protein which causes damage to neurons. They are not the same disease however and therefore time and close observance should be practiced prior to a diagnosis. Medications which may be helpful with Parkinson's may be dangerous if administered to a person living with Lewy Body Dementia. Some symptoms of Lewy Body Dementia may include insomnia, visual mis-perceptions and disturbances including but not limited to hallucinations, on and off symptoms, delusional thinking, movement problems which may incline falls, hand dexterity, and swallowing in later stages and intermittent inability to move. There may also be acute drops in heart rate, blood pressure, and/or blood sugar. Capgras Syndrome which may present in persons living with LB Dementia is characterized by a delusional belief that a person whom they know has been replaced by an imposter (ie: when seeing a relative they may say "who are you and what did you do with my brother?")

KORSAKOFF'S SYNDROME: This disorder primarily affects the memory, both short and long term, and is a result of a deficiency in vitamin B1 (Thiamine). The most common cause is prolonged alcohol abuse, but it can also be brought on by dietary deficiencies, prolonged hyper-emesis, or chemotherapy. Unlike other chronic dementias, there can be some reversal of symptoms if the related causes are mitigated prior to prolonged progression.