

The Dementia Umbrella

Dementia

An umbrella term which describes a wide range of symptoms including memory loss and mental decline. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, but there are many others:

Alzheimer's Disease

Most common (60-80%). AD is a degenerative disease which attacks the brain, resulting in impaired function. 5% of cases are early onset.

Vascular Dementia

The 2nd most common (10%). VaD occurs through a reduced blood supply to the brain, usually due to stroke. People with advanced heart disease are at risk. Can also cause vision problems and hallucinations.

Dementia with Lewy Bodies

DLB is caused by protein deposits called Lewy bodies in nerve cells in the brain. Can cause visual hallucinations, reverse-cycle sleeping, trembling hands, and limb weakness.

Fronto-temporal Dementia

FTD includes all dementias where the front and sides of the brain are affected, causing problems in language and behavior. Can affect people as young as 45. Can cause loss of inhibitions and poor impulse control.

Seven A's of Dementia

- **Anosognosia:** Loss of awareness that something has changed with self. Do not see loss of abilities that others see.
- **Agnosia:** Loss of ability to recognize input from the five senses.
- **Aphasia:** Loss of language; speaking, reading, and/or writing.
- **Apraxia:** Loss of ability to tell your body how to carry out purposeful movement.
- **Altered perception:** Misinterprets sensory information, especially in poor light (Sundowning).
- **Amnesia:** Loss of memory.
- **Apathy:** Loss of ability to take initiative.

Other Dementias

- Parkinson's Disease (early signs are problems with judgment and reasoning, and can cause irritability and paranoia)
- Mixed dementia (more than one type concurrently)
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob (rare, quickly progressing)
- Wernicke-Korsakoff (caused by alcoholism)
- Metabolic diseases
- Normal pressure hydrocephalus
- Huntington's disease
- Drug toxicity
- White matter diseases
- Mass effects
- Depression
- Infection