LIVING POSITIVELY WITH DEMENTIA

Sarah Hennessy Mead
THE TERM DEMENTIA DESCRIBES

a. a set of symptoms
b. progressive decline in functioning

NOT a normal part of ageing
WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Changes in

MEMORY

AND changes in at least one of

Language

Motor Skills

Thinking Skills

Other changes include

Personality

Emotion

Perception

Behaviour
Dementia statistics in Australia:

- Alzheimer's: 55%
- Vascular: 10%
- Mixed: 10%
- Lewy body: 10%
- FTLD: 9%
- Others: 6%

DEMENTIA TYPES
STATISTICS ON DEMENTIA

• 1 in 1000 under 65 years
• 1 in 20 over 65 years
• 1 in 4 over 80 years

• 266,000 people diagnosed with dementia (2009)
• 16,000 are under 65 years

Access Economics 2011
OTHER CONDITIONS THAT CAUSE SIMILAR SYMPTOMS

Other conditions that are treatable:

- Infections
- Dehydrations
- Effects of medications or other substances
- Hormonal disorders
- Chronic pain or illness
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Brain tumor
- Hearing or sight deficits
- Depression, grief and stress
- Post/operative (delirium)

These are not dementia and are treatable
DIAGNOSIS

Possible indicators:

- Memory loss
- Confusion about time and place
- Problems finding the right words
- Constantly misplacing things
- Changes in personality and behaviour
- Getting lost in a familiar place
HOW A DIAGNOSIS IS MADE

Benefits of early diagnosis

General Practitioner
- detailed history
- thorough physical exam.
- blood tests/urine tests
- eliminate treatable conditions
  ➔ refer to specialist

Specialist
- history
- Cognitive testing – eg MMSE
- Brain scans, CT & MRI
- Neurology assessment

UNDERSTAND ALZHEIMER’S
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MEDICATIONS

Acetyl cholinesterase inhibitors
- Aricept, Exelon and Reminyl
- Action in the brain
- Benefits for functioning
- Possible Side effects

Memantine
- Ebixa
- Action in the brain
- Fewer side effects
- Subsidised on the PBS

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BRAIN STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Frontal lobes
• planning, organising, decision making
• starting and stopping actions
• regulating social behaviour

Temporal Lobes
• short term memory
• long term memory

Limbic region
• consciousness
• sleep
• appetite
• emotions

Parietal lobes
• speech
• language
• reading
• spatial perception
• patterns of behaviour

Occipital Lobe
• visual Processing
NATIONAL DEMENTIA HELPLINE

1800 100 500
Interpreter Service available

RESOURCE CENTRE

Written resources
Over 75 Help Sheets
22 different languages
FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT ALZHEIMER’S AUSTRALIA SA

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