

Dementia and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

Presented by Julie A. Moran, DO

Geriatrician, Aging and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Specialist

Consultant, Tewksbury Hospital and Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services

Clinical Instructor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School



Massachusetts Dept.
of Developmental
Services (DDS)

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Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

- ❑ The Importance of Expectation-Setting
- ❑ Early Stage
- ❑ Mid Stage
- ❑ Advanced or End Stage Dementia



Early Stage

- ❑ Can be very subtle...be an astute observer!
- ❑ Usually mild changes are noted in higher level functions/skills
- ❑ Early signs may be seen in the form of personality or mood changes
- ❑ Difficulty with short term memory starts to take on a more noticeable pattern
 - ❑ Decreased ability to learn new things
 - ❑ Decreased ability to remember recently given information



Mid Stage

- ❑ Ability to perform baseline skills becomes much more impaired
 - ❑ Work skills, household chores, academic skills may have very noticeable impact
- ❑ Ability to perform personal care skills becomes more affected
 - ❑ Need more help with dressing, bathing, toileting
- ❑ Memory becomes more affected, impacting every day life
 - ❑ Need more cueing and prompting
 - ❑ Need more reminders



Advanced/Late Stage

Features include:

- ❑ Profound memory loss
 - ❑ Unable to recognize loved ones
- ❑ Loss of meaningful speech
 - ❑ Usually 6 words or less, or mostly just vocalizations
- ❑ Full incontinence (bowel and bladder)
- ❑ Total functional dependence



The Trajectory of Dementia

- ❑ The stages of dementia are a general framework
 - ❑ Every person has a different time course
- ❑ Mid stage dementia can often be the longest stage
 - ❑ Distinguished by *not* being early stage and *not yet* having features of advanced disease
- ❑ Having a general sense of where on the trajectory the individual is helps for setting expectations and preparing for the future



Time Course

- ❑ Dementia is typically gradual and steady
- ❑ Any “rapid” deterioration is not expected
 - ❑ Evaluate the person for acute underlying medical issue
- ❑ Adults with dementia become more vulnerable to physical and cognitive setbacks in the setting of medical illness
- ❑ Often dementia will appear to “accelerate” in the setting of an acute illness, hospitalization, etc.



Dementia is a Terminal Disease

- ❑ Dementia is terminal (deadly)
- ❑ Death occurs due to complications of dementia
 - ❑ Immobility, poor swallowing and nutritional intake lead to
 - ❑ Increased risk of infections, respiratory illnesses, etc.
- ❑ As dementia progresses, one of the key goals is to maintain medical stability
 - ❑ Encourage adequate nutrition
 - ❑ Provide healthy/intact skin integrity
 - ❑ Avoid sick contacts: use good hand hygiene practices, get recommended vaccinations



Physical Changes Throughout the Progression

- ❑ Physical changes and losses can occur as part of the natural progression of dementia
- ❑ These include:
 - ❑ Worsening gait impairment
 - ❑ Worsening ability to swallow (dysphagia)
 - ❑ Worsening incontinence
 - ❑ Risk of new onset seizures



Additional Webinars on Aging with IDD

General Aging in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- ❑ Understanding Age Related Changes
- ❑ The Role of Polypharmacy
- ❑ Identifying and Assessing Pain
- ❑ Behavior Related Changes and Aging in Adults with IDD
- ❑ Health Promotion and Aging in Adults with IDD
- ❑ Mobility and Aging in Adults with IDD
- ❑ Aging with Down Syndrome
- ❑ Aging and Cerebral Palsy

Dementia and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- ❑ Introduction to Dementia and Aging with IDD
- ❑ Early Evaluation of Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease
- ❑ Stages of Alzheimer's Disease
- ❑ Applying the Knowledge to Dementia Caregiving and Caregiver Support
- ❑ Caregiving in Action: Case Studies and Practical Tips



Additional Aging with IDD Resources

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dds/aging-with-id.html

Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation & Research
http://shriver.umassmed.edu/cdder/aging_idd_education



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cdder@umassmed.edu

