

MIND Your Health



TOPIC: Elderly Mental Health

Joint Initiative By



**INSTITUTE
of MENTAL
HEALTH**
National Healthcare Group

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Thank you for your kind understanding.

Is depression part of ageing?

- NOT part and parcel of ageing
- Older adults reported higher levels of well-being than do younger adults¹
- Enhanced emotion regulation

(1. Urry H. L., & Gross, J. J. (2010). Emotion regulation in older age. *Current Directions in Psychology*, 19, 352 – 357.

Depression in the elderly



- Low Mood
- Disturbed sleep
- Appetite
- Interest
- Guilt
- Concentration
- Psychomotor retardation
- Suicidal thoughts



Pseudo-dementia

Depression without sadness

- Anxious
- Preoccupation with worries
- Marked negativity



Preoccupation with bodily functions

Anxiety in the elderly



Physical
Tremor
Dizziness
Headache
Indigestion
Palpitations
Muscle ache
Chest discomfort
Bowel disturbance
Difficulty breathing

Behavioural
Avoidance
Seek reassurance



Psychological
Irritability
Restlessness
Sleep disturbance
Worrying thoughts
Sexual dysfunction
Sensitivity to noise
Poor concentration

(Psychology Tools, 2021)

Anxiety in the elderly

■ **Unique symptom expression**

■ Worry spheres

- Falling
- Fewer work-related worries
- Anxiety for a number of social situations rather than social concerns

■ Subtypes of OCD

- Greater fear of having sinned, more hand washing
- Compulsive hoarding severity increases with age



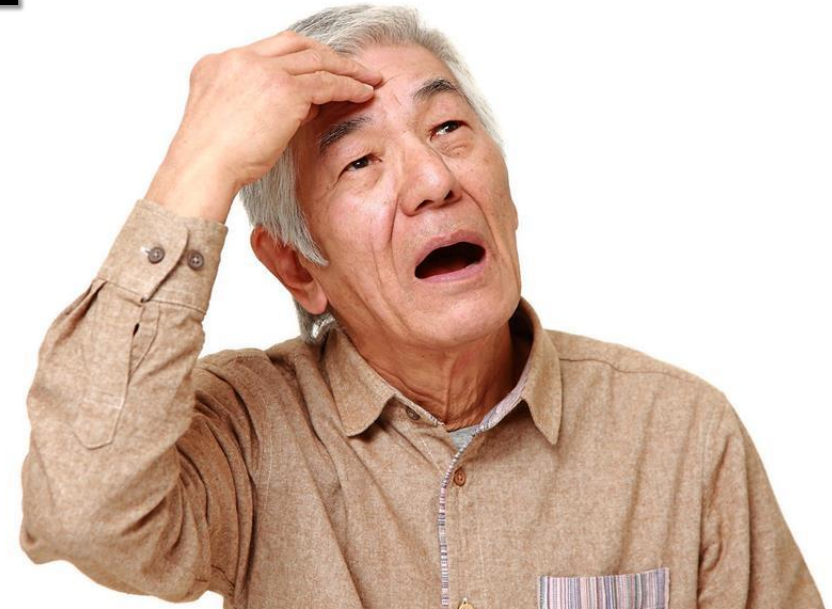
Dementia in the elderly

- Prevalence of dementia was 10% in Singapore in the older adult (60 years old and above) population¹
- Older age (75 years old) was associated with a higher risk¹

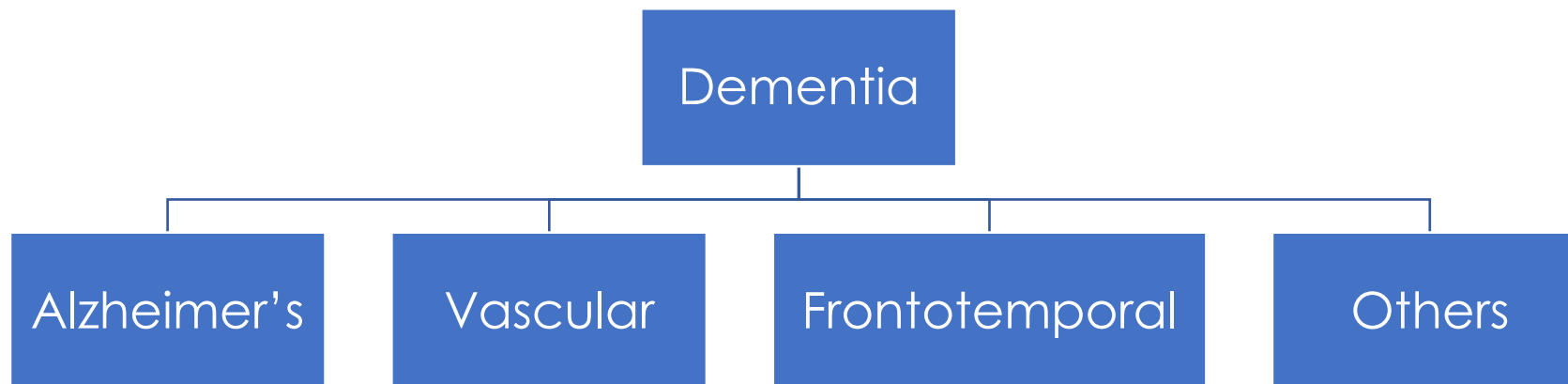
1. Subramaniam. M, et al. (2015). Prevalence of dementia in people aged 60 years and above: Results from the WISE study. *Journal of Alzheimers Disease*, 45, 1127 – 1138.

Dementia in the elderly

- Not just memory problems!
- Not a specific disease
 - A collection of symptoms
 - Caused by a number of disorders that affect the brain



(Chiew, 2016)



Dementia in the elderly

- A significant decline in brain functions
 - Amnesia = Memory problems
 - Aphasia = Language problems
 - Agnosia = Sensory processing problems
 - Apraxia = Motor planning problems
 - Executive dysfunction = Reasoning, planning, organization, problem solving, control problems

Dementia in the elderly

- Interfere with independence in everyday activities
- Does not occur exclusively in the context of delirium
- Not better explained by another mental disorder

IRREVERSIBLE

NOT A NORMAL PROCESS OF AGEING

Dementia in the elderly



- Forgetful of *recent* events
- Misplacing things
- Difficulty in communication
- Deviation from routine
- Difficulties in planning
- Difficulties (or reduced quality) in completing familiar tasks
- Poor judgment (in social situations)
- Confusion with time and place

Stages of Dementia

Mild Dementia	Need assistance in complicated tasks e.g. finance management, operating gadgets/appliances
Moderate Dementia	Need assistance in self-care, hygiene, occasional incontinence, language difficulty
Severe Dementia	Total assistance in ADL, lost of language ability and physical changes in mobility - bedridden

Challenging behaviors in Dementia

- Behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD)

	verbal/vocal	
<p><u>Verbally nonaggressive</u> Complaining Negativism Repetitive sentences/questions Constant unwarranted requests for attention or help</p> <p>nonaggressive</p>	<p><u>Verbally aggressive</u> Cursing and verbal aggression Making strange noises Verbal sexual advances Screaming</p>	<p>aggressive</p>
<p><u>Physically nonaggressive</u> Performing repetitious mannerisms Inappropriate robing and disrobing Eating inappropriate substances Handling things inappropriately Trying to get to a different place Pacing, aimlessly wandering General restlessness Hoarding things Hiding things</p>	<p><u>Physically aggressive</u> Physical sexual advances Hurting self or others Throwing things Tearing things Scratching Grabbing Spitting, biting Kicking Hitting</p>	
	physical	

- Different BPSD may occur at any time during the course of dementia
- Not every person with dementia will experience BPSD in the course of their illness

What can be done?

Biological	Social	Psychological
Medications	Financial assistance	Behavioral therapy
	Lasting power of attorney	Simulated presence therapy
	Court appointed deputyship	Occupational therapy
	Advanced medical directives	
	Home modification	

Connecting with people with dementia...

Practical tip 1 – Life story

- Use of life story to understand person with dementia



Practical Tip 2: Modify communication

- Good listening
 - Non-verbal
 - Themes
- Ensure the person knows you are talking to them
 - Establish eye-contact
- Support attempts to communicate
- Adjust to accommodate abilities
 - Repeat, revise
- Give the most important information at the end of the sentence
- Use familiar phrases and expressions

Practical tip 3 – Support choice making

- The choice making continuum
 - Open ended question: what do you want for lunch?
 - Choice of two (verbal): do you want rice or noodles?
 - Choice of two (representation of activities)
 - Choice of two (actual activities)
- Observe behavioral indicators
 - E.g., move towards or away, touch, smile, shout, point, push away, throw away

Practical tip 4 – Facilitate participation

- Tactile cues and hand under hand technique



<https://youtu.be/6gLrH8mioCw>

Practical tip 5 – Play along!



<https://youtu.be/ZpXeefZ2jAM>

Ageing gracefully

A Accept changes

A Adapt to limitations

A Adventurous to explore alternatives

Where can you get help?

<u>Community Resources</u>	<u>Contact Details</u>	<u>Website</u>
Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA) People with dementia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day care services - Elder-sitters Caregivers and helpers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counselling - Support groups - Dementia care training 	6377 0700	https://alz.org.sg
Memory clinics	Available in restructured hospitals (CGH, IMH, SGH, NNI, NUHS, TTSH, KTPH)	
Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)	1800 650 6060	www.aic.sg
CARA	cara@dementia.org.sg	https://cara.sg



**Aging is not lost youth but a
new stage of opportunity and
strength.**

Betty Friedan