

Separate Volume 3:

### **Mental Problems in old age have a profound effect on well-being**

- The quality of life can decrease
- Living alone
- Discrimination
- Disappointment and Frustration
- Dying at a young age

Dementia is one of the main diseases of old age.

### **What is Dementia?**

A disease occurs changes in higher human characteristic such as memory, behavior, decision making, intelligence and personality as a result of the gradual death of the nerve cells in the brain. It is more common in the elderly (Above 60). It is important to understand that this is not the result of normal aging.

### **Symptoms and Problems**

1. Frequent forgetfulness of day-to-day things
  - Losing own belongings
  - Accusations that they were stolen by others
  - Forgetting to use the home appliances
  - Forgetting the way of use money after going to the shop
  - Unable to recognize their spouse and children at the peak
2. Decreasing the ability to adapt into new environment
3. Changes in the daily routine
4. Being quarrelsome
  - Screaming

- Walking around without a purpose
  - Abnormalities in sexual behavior
  - Insomnia
  - Isolation
  - Crying/ Wails
5. Lack of bowel and bladder control
  6. Decreasing impulse and emotion control
  7. Misconceptions
    - Telling that the person still goes to work
    - Telling that spouse / parents are alive (Even if they are not)

### **Risk Situations**

- Going for a walk away from home
- Being get lost
- Facing accidents on the road
- Use of electrical equipment
- Falls and injuries
- Fires (Due to not switching off gas stoves)

### **These patients need help from others**

- Washing and bathing
- Wearing clothes
- Using lavatories

### **When treating these patients, if they have pains, need to treat those firstly**

- Constipation
- Vision problems/ difficulties in hearing
- Delirium caused by infection

Treatment for these things is essential.

### **Non -pharmacological treatments**

- Place the patient in an uncomplicated, usual environment
- Stimulating the senses
- Appreciating good behaviors

### **Drug Therapies**

Controlling the behavioral problems and develop the memory  
(Antipsychotics, memory enhances)

### **Points to note in particular**

1. Since decisions regarding property cannot be made, authority may be delegated to someone else
2. The mental state of the caregiver must be ascertained. (Caring for such a patient can be quite a difficult task.)

### **How to look after the patients**

- The caretaker should be kind
- Everything should be reminded again because forgetting is the main point
- Not changing the patient's usual environment
- Remembering past things and events frequently
- Taking care of food
- Concerning the safety of the patient
- Concerning about the cleanliness of the patient
- Practicing to do the bowl movements properly
- Referral to a doctor if other symptoms are occurred
- Administer the prescribed medication at the right time every day

- Remove any hazardous material from the patient (fragile items)
- Reduce giving liquids in the morning and in the evening can reduce sleep urination
- Writing down everything clearly in colorful handwriting

#### **Advice for you as dementia caregiver**

- Share responsibilities with other relatives.
- Delegate responsibility and take a break when you feel tired or stressed.
- If the patient is restless or not sleeping, inform the doctor and get appropriate medicine. Then the caregiver can rest for the night also the patient is also less likely to get into an accident.
- Take the patient to the toilet frequently. Then the number of clothes that have to be washed due to contamination can be reduced.
- Talk to a doctor or someone who can understand the problem you are facing.
- Get legal advice on property owned by the person with dementia.

If you need more information about this,  
you can visit the hospitals in the area

**Visit the mental health unit**

**It is your responsibility and duty to take care  
of the parents who took care of you when you  
were a child**

## **Mental Health and Aging elderly**



**Mental Health Unit  
Divisional Hospital  
Athurugiriya**