Understanding Dementia

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What’s Next – Information about Dementia, Elder Care and Supports
Brighton, ON
Why is dementia important?

- Our population is aging
  - Currently 1.8 million older adults in Ontario
  - Number of adults > 65
  - ↑ 13 – 25% in next 40 years
How common is dementia?

• Currently 750,000 individuals have dementia in Canada
  – Increase to ~ 1.1 million in next 30 years
• Southeast LHIN (Kingston Area):
  – Currently: 7,800 individuals with dementia
  – Increase by 18% in next 8 years
What is dementia?

- A decline in memory and other cognitive functions from previous levels
- Cognitive decline which impacts on day to day function, causes impairment
- Several different causes of dementia
Dementia or age-related memory changes?

**Age Associated Memory Changes:**
- Decline in memory and brain functions when compared to younger populations
- “Normal” cognitive aging

**Mild Cognitive Impairment:**
- Cognitive decline noticeable by others,
- Scores lower than average for age group
- No problems with daily functioning
- Risk factor for developing dementia

**Dementia:**
- More significant cognitive decline
- Scores lower than MCI
- Memory or other cognitive problems
- *Impacts day to day functioning*
Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease

• Types of dementia:
  – Alzheimer’s disease (60%)
    • Early memory problems, gradual progressive decline
  – Vascular Dementia (10 – 20%)
    • Caused by a large stroke or multiple small strokes
  – Dementia with Lewy Bodies (10-20%)
    • Memory problems along with gait difficulties, tremor, other features
  – Other:
    • Mixed (Alzheimer’s and vascular, Frontotemporal, Parkinson’s disease)
## Things That Can Look Like Dementia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Delirium</th>
<th>Dementia (Alzheimer’s)</th>
<th>Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onset</td>
<td>Acute</td>
<td>Insidious</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Days to weeks</td>
<td>Months to years</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Fluctuation</td>
<td>Slowly progressive</td>
<td>Diurnal variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>Impaired, fluctuates</td>
<td>Clear until late in illness</td>
<td>Unimpaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention &amp; Memory</td>
<td>Inattentive, poor memory</td>
<td>Poor memory without inattention</td>
<td>Difficult concentrating, memory intact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Depressed, loss of interest and pleasure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Signs of Dementia

- Difficulties with short-term memory
  - Functional impairment in complex tasks:
    - Managing household finances, medications
  - Forgetting recent conversations, repetitive questions, missing appointments
  - May have some difficulties with word-finding, forgetting names of familiar people
  - Difficulties learning new tasks
  - Becoming disoriented in new or familiar environments
How is dementia diagnosed?

• History taken from person with memory complaints along with information from reliable informant

• Review of medical conditions and medications that might be cause of cognitive problems

• Physical examination
  – High blood pressure, other risk factors for stroke or heart disease
  – Look for signs of stroke or Parkinson’s disease
Evaluation of Dementia

- **Cognitive Testing:**
  - Pen and paper questions, scores are compared to populations of similar age, education level
  - Examine memory function, language, orientation, executive (planning) functions
  - Mini-Mental Status Exam
  - Clock Drawing Test
  - Montreal Cognitive Assessment
Evaluation of Dementia

- **Bloodwork:**
  - Rule out other potential causes of cognitive problems
    - Low thyroid, kidney problems, vitamin deficiencies

- **Brain Imaging:**
  - CT scan or MRI
    - Evaluate for possible strokes or other brain changes

- **EKG (electrocardiogram):**
  - Heart rhythm (important for some dementia medications)
Treatments for Dementia in Canada

**Cholinesterase Inhibitors**
- Donepezil (Aricept)
- Rivastigmine (Exelon)
- Galantamine (Reminyl)

**Other Medications**
- Memantine (Ebixa)
Where to Get Help

• Family Physicians
• Geriatric Psychiatry and Medicine Services
• Alzheimer Society
• Other Community Resources
Services for Older Adults with Dementia

• Geriatric Psychiatry Services (Providence Care)
  – Outreach teams in Belleville, Kingston, Napanee
  – Serves older adults in their homes
  – Liaison work with 38 local nursing homes
  – Consultation service to QHC, KGH, HDH, St. Mary’s
  – Inpatient services at Providence Care
Services for Older Adults with Dementia

• Geriatric Medicine Programs:
  – Memory Clinic (Dr. Garcia)
  – Inpatient rehabilitation program (St. Mary’s)
  – Outreach teams in Kingston, Belleville
  – Day hospital program
  – Consultation service
Conclusions

• Alzheimer’s disease and related forms of dementia are common among older adults
• Early detection and treatment of dementia is important
• Several services to support diagnosis and treatment of dementia in the Brighton area
Thank you

• Questions?