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Dementia



What is Dementia?

- **Dementia** is a common name given to what is known as memory diseases.
- **Dementia** is a group of degenerative diseases that affect the brain and cause a continuous deterioration in mental abilities (memory, motor skills, language skills, and executive functions).
- **Alzheimer's disease** is the most common type of dementia, but **dementia** affects mostly **older adults**.
- **Estimated 5.0 million** adults with dementia in **2014** and projected to be nearly **14 million** by **2060** affecting people from **65** years and above.



What is Dementia?

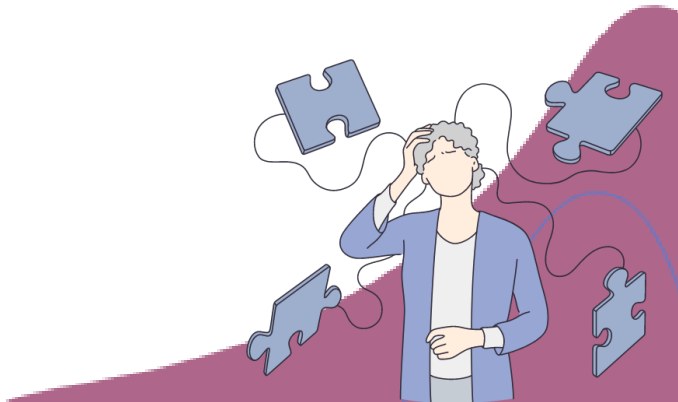
- **Dementia** isn't a part of normal aging. Many older adults live their entire lives without developing dementia.
- **Normal aging** may include weakening muscles and bones, stiffening of arteries and vessels, and some age-related memory changes like struggling to find a word but remembering it later, occasionally misplacing car keys etc. Normally, knowledge and experiences built over years, old memories, and language would stay intact.



What are the most common types of dementia?

Alzheimer's disease.

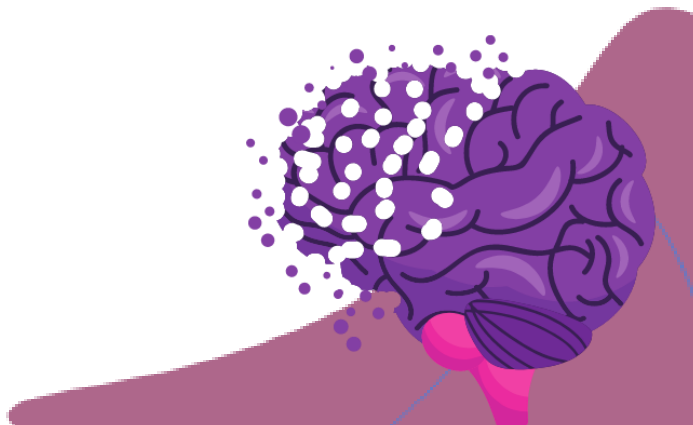
- It's the most common cause of dementia, accounting for 60 to 80 % of cases caused by specific changes in the brain.
- The main symptom is trouble remembering recent events, such as a conversation that occurred minutes or hours ago.
- Difficulty remembering more distant memories occurs later in the disease. Other concerns like difficulty in walking or talking or personality changes also come later.



What are the most common types of dementia?

Vascular dementia.

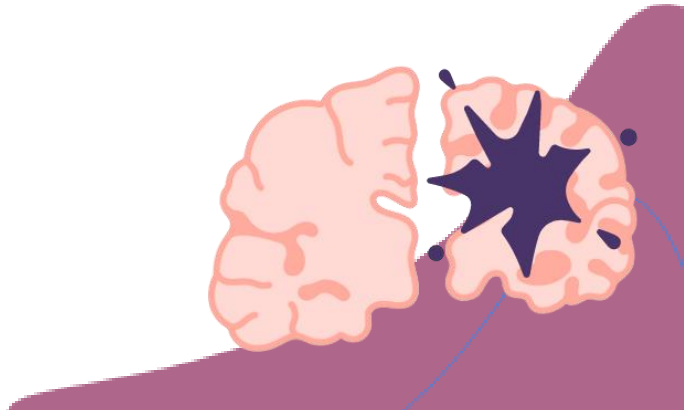
- About 10 % of dementia cases are linked to strokes or other issues with blood flow to the brain.
- Diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol are also risk factors. Symptoms vary depending on the area and size of the brain affected. The disease progresses gradually as the individual gets more strokes or mini strokes.



What are the most common types of dementia?

Lewy body dementia.

- In addition to memory loss, people with this form of dementia may have movement or balance problems like stiffness or trembling.
- Many people also experience changes in alertness including daytime sleepiness, confusion or staring spells. They may also have trouble sleeping at night or may experience visual hallucinations (seeing people, objects or shapes that are not actually there).



What are the most common types of dementia?

Fronto-temporal dementia

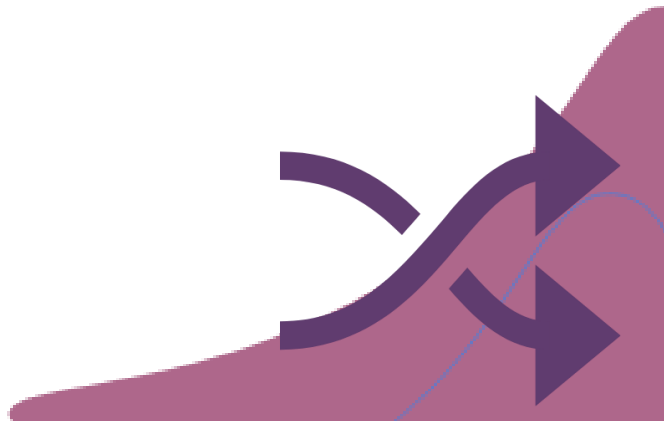
- This type of dementia most often leads to **changes in personality and behavior** because of the part of the brain that it affects.
- People with this condition may embarrass themselves or behave inappropriately. For instance, a previously cautious person may make offensive comments and neglect responsibilities at home or work.
- There may also be problems with **language skills like speaking or understanding**.



What are the most common types of dementia?

Mixed dementia.

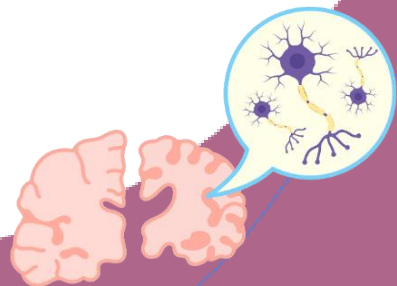
- Sometimes more than one type of dementia is present simultaneously, especially in people **aged 80 and older**.
- **Example**, a person may have Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia at the same time. Person with mixed dementia is said to have symptoms prominent to one type of dementia or may overlap with symptoms of another type.
- **Disease** progression may be faster than with one kind of dementia.



What are the signs and symptoms of dementia?

Symptoms can vary widely from person to person. People with dementia have problems with:

- Memory Loss.
- Attention Loss.
- Difficulty to communicate.
- Forgetting old memories.
- Getting lost in a familiar neighborhood.
- Difficulty in reasoning, judgment, and solving problem.
- Using unusual words to refer to familiar objects.
- Not being able to complete tasks independently.
- Forgetting the name of a close family member or friend.
- Visual perception beyond typical age-related, changes in vision.



What are the risk factors that increases dementia?

- Age

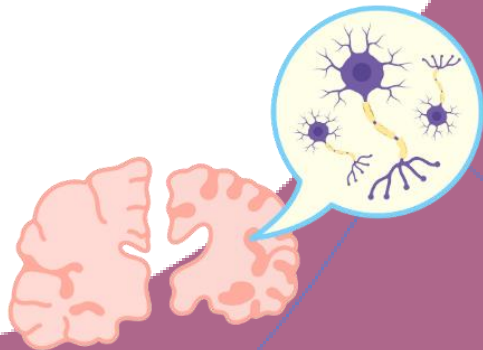
The strongest known risk factor for dementia is aging, with most cases affecting those of 65 years and older.

- Family history

Having a first-degree relative with Alzheimer's disease increases the risk of developing it by 10 to 30 %.

- Race/ethnicity

Older African Americans are twice more likely to have dementia than whites. Hispanics 1.5 times more likely to have dementia than whites.



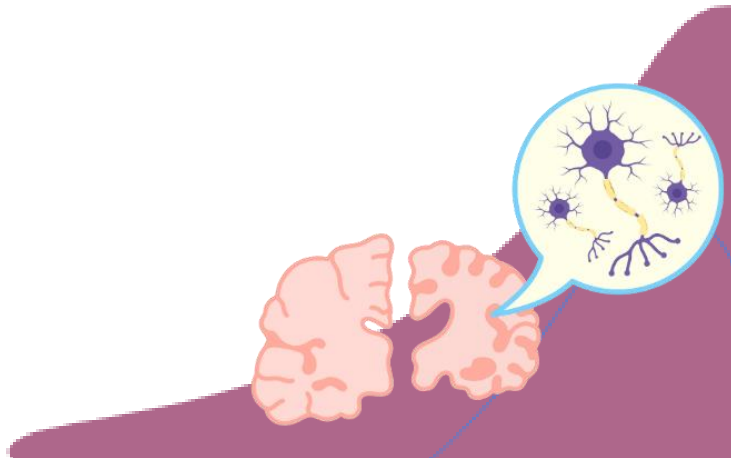
What are the risk factors that increases dementia?

- Poor heart health

High blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking increase the risk of dementia if not treated properly.

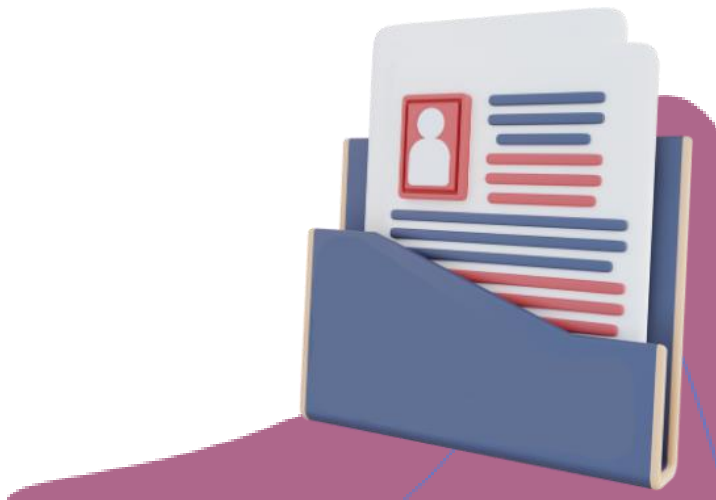
- Traumatic brain injury

Head injuries can increase the risk of dementia, especially if they are severe or occur repeatedly.



How to diagnose dementia?

- A healthcare provider can perform tests on attention, memory, problem solving and other cognitive abilities to see if there is cause for concern.
- Physical exam, blood tests, and brain scans like a CT or MRI can help determine an underlying cause.



What is the treatment of dementia?

- **Treatment of dementia** depends on the underlying cause. Neurodegenerative dementias, like Alzheimer's disease, have no cure, though there are medications that can help protect the brain or manage symptoms such as anxiety or behaviour changes.
- Research to develop more treatment options is ongoing.



How to prevent dementia?

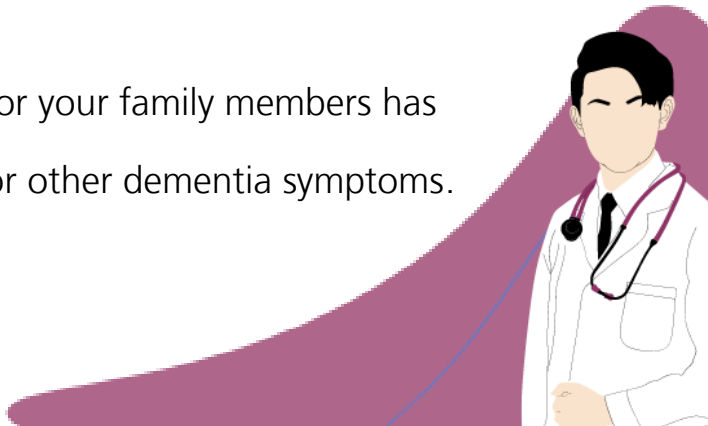
Leading a healthy lifestyle may decrease chances of developing chronic diseases and reduce the number of people with dementia.

It might be beneficial to do the following:

- Healthy lifestyle
- Maintain a healthy diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get enough vitamins.
- Manage cardiovascular risk factors.
- Treat hearing problems.
- Treat health conditions.
- Get good-quality sleep.
- Quit smoking.

When to see a doctor?

See a doctor if you or your family members has memory problems or other dementia symptoms.



Sources and References:

CDC

All illustrations from Canva.com

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