

Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease, and Dementia

Chapter 17

Learning Objectives

Lesson 17.1: Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease, and Dementia

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1. Describe two normal age-related changes in cognition.
2. Identify five main categories of confusion.
3. Explain why the use of medications can lead to confusion in older adults.
4. Describe at least three signs or symptoms of delirium.
5. Identify five symptoms of dementia.

Learning Objectives

Lesson 17.1: Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease, and Dementia

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- 6. Describe the signs and symptoms seen during the progression of Alzheimer's disease.
- 7. List three mental health care goals for clients with Alzheimer's disease.
- 8. Describe the need-driven dementia-compromised behavior model.
- 9. Identify two types of support groups for the caregivers of clients with Alzheimer's disease.

Confusion Has Many Faces

- Cognition refers to the higher brain functions
 - Intelligence
 - Learning
 - Judgment
 - Reasoning
 - Knowledge
 - Understanding
 - Memory
- Cognitive impairment is a disruption in higher brain functions that results in confusion

Normal Changes in Cognition

- The most significant losses include slower response times and impaired short-term memory
 - More time is needed to process, store, and retrieve information
 - Confusion is not normal
 - Confusion demands investigation

Five “Ds” of Confusion

- Damage
- Delirium
- Dementia
- Depression
- Deprivation

Medications and the Elderly Population

- Many medications and drugs cause confusion, especially in older adults
 - Drugs are eliminated more slowly; metabolism is slower
- Confusion is often the first sign of a drug reaction
- Doctors are becoming careful with the prescribing of psychotropic drugs

Clients with Delirium

- Delirium is a change in consciousness that occurs quickly
 - May result in delusions or hallucinations
 - Reversible if treated early
 - Full recovery of mental functions occurs if cause is found and treated
- It is important for health care providers to recognize the signs of delirium
- Treat the source

Clients with Dementia

● Dementia

➤ Loss of multiple abilities

- Memory
- Language
- Ability to think and understand

➤ Causes

- Primary (Alzheimer's disease)
- Secondary as a result of disease (such as human immunodeficiency virus [HIV])

➤ Types

- Vascular dementia
- Alzheimer's disease

Symptoms of Dementia

- Individuals with dementia are increasingly unable to process new information; losing ability to retrieve and use information they have accumulated through their lifetimes
- Most common early symptom is declining memory
- Sundown syndrome: A group of behaviors characterized by confusion, agitation, and disruptive actions that occur in the late afternoon or evening

Alzheimer's Disease (AD)

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- Progressive, degenerative disorder that affects brain cells and results in impaired
 - Memory
 - Thinking
 - Behavior
- Divided into two categories
 - Early onset
 - Before 65 years of age
 - Late onset
- Not a normal part of aging
- Involves the gradual, progressive death of one's brain and its functions

Alzheimer's Disease

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● Stages of Alzheimer's disease

➤ Early stage

- Loss of recent memory
- Inability to learn, process information, and retain information
- Language problems

➤ Intermediate stage

- Inability to recall any recent events or process new information

➤ Severe stage

- Inability to do anything

➤ End stage

- Coma and death can occur

Therapeutic Interventions

- Therapeutic care for clients with AD has three major goals
 - To provide for clients' safety and well-being
 - To manage clients' behaviors therapeutically
 - To provide support for family, relatives, and caregivers
- When behaving inappropriately, clients are gently redirected to less stressful activities

Need-Driven Dementia-Compromised Behavior Model

- Views offensive behaviors as communications of unmet needs
- Behaviors result from interaction of one's background factors with changeable environmental triggers (proximal factors)
- By using this model, caregivers are able to respond in ways that meet needs, thus decreasing inappropriate behaviors

Caregiver Support

- Caring for a loved one with AD is probably the most difficult of all caregiving experiences
 - Most individuals with AD are cared for in the home by family, friends, and home care agencies
- Informal support groups
 - Family members, friends, people at work, social groups, and faith communities
- Formal support groups
 - Home care agencies, elder care centers, and hospices

Questions?