

What Is Alzheimer's Disease?



Alzheimer's disease, AD is the most common dementia syndrome. It is a central nervous system degenerative disease which starts gradually and progresses over many years. In degenerative disease, changes happen to brain cells, leading to their death and loss of neurological function one after another over time.

The most common early symptom is short term memory loss, i.e., difficulty remembering recent events. Other symptoms include difficulty with language, i.e., understanding others or expressing self, disorientation, i.e., not recognizing time, people or being lost in place, sleep disturbance, neglecting self-care and behavioral changes. It is not uncommon that family seeks medical advice late, blaming memory loss on old age, until more problems or behavioral issues come to the picture. Behavioral symptoms include agitation, irritability, being suspicious or demanding and loss of interest. In a simple way, patient goes back in time losing what he has learned over years; he may "forget" how to talk, eat, walk, control urine and stools, etc., and acts like a little child.

We have a lot of information about Alzheimer's disease, but the exact cause is unknown. Diagnosis relies on the history of the illness and the examination by the physician. Blood tests and imaging studies would be needed to rule out other possibilities, but no practical tests are available to diagnose AD. Old age and family history of AD increase the chance of getting the disease; the risk is 3% at age 65 and 40% at age 85.

Unfortunately there is no cure for AD, but there are several medications which may delay its progression. Behavioral approaches may help with behavioral symptoms; if they fail medications may be needed. An important part of the management includes paying attention to the caregiver and recruiting all resources available to help the patient and his family. There is no definitive way to prevent AD but leading a healthy life, eating Mediterranean diet, doing regular exercise, and keeping high mental functioning may decrease the risk of AD.

Authored by: **Dr. Khaldoun Mozahem, Consultant Neurologist, Head of Neurology, ACPN**



WELCOME Aboard!



Maya Fleifel Sidani
Clinical Psychologist

Ms. Maya Fleifel Sidani is a highly qualified professional with a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology from Saint Joseph University, Beirut Lebanon in 2000 and 14 years of international experience gained in different parts of the world, including USA, Egypt, and the UAE. She has been of service to clients of different nationalities and is fluent in English, Arabic, and French. Ms. Maya joined American Center of Psychiatry and Neurology as Clinical Psychologist and now seeing patients in Dubai Branch.

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Ahmed Nader Al Ka'abi
Special Education Teacher and ABA Therapist

Mr. Ahmed Al Ka'abi, the team's newest ABA Specialist, built his expertise through years of practical experience and credential qualifications. He has completed a BA. Degree in Special Education at The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan 2002. Mr. Ahmed's long years of experience has made him capable of handling cases of both children and adults. With the application of vast array of methods such as ABA/TEACCH/PECS, including preparing the appropriate Individual Education Plan (IEP), he is able to address all cases with high level of success. Mr. Ahmed joined American Center for Special Abilities and now seeing patients in Abu Dhabi.

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