



NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDERS

MAJOR AND MILD NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER DUE TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE (ALZHEIMER'S DEMENTIA)

What it is:

Alzheimer's disease is a neurocognitive disorder (either major or mild, depending upon its severity) that has a gradual onset and progression in cognitive impairment. In order for a diagnosis of major or mild neurocognitive disorder due to Alzheimer's disease to be made, the following criteria need to be met:

1. The individual meets the criteria for either major or minor neurocognitive disorder
2. There is slow onset and gradual progression of cognitive impairment
3. Genetic testing or family history has shown evidence of a causative Alzheimer's genetic mutation
4. There is evidence of a decline in memory and learning
5. There is a steady and progressive decline in cognition, without extended plateaus of stability
6. There is an absence of other diseases, disorders or conditions that could contribute to the cognitive decline

Common symptoms of mild neurocognitive disorder due to Alzheimer's disease:

1. Difficulty multitasking or handling more than one task at a time
2. Everyday tasks taking longer than normal to complete
3. Difficulty recalling recent events
4. Subtle changes in personality, for example, decreased empathy, decreased inhibition, restlessness, increased extraversion or introversion
5. Difficulty remembering correct words for objects and names of people



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Common symptoms of major neurocognitive disorder due to Alzheimer's disease:

1. Memory loss
2. Difficulty remembering and retaining new information
3. Difficulties with abstract thinking
4. Forgetting the names of everyday objects or familiar people
5. Losing communication skills
6. Experiencing disorientation relating to time and place
7. Experiencing physical movement and balance problems
8. Extreme behavioural changes, for example, dresses inappropriately, speaks about topics that are controversial or offensive without regard for others feelings, makes decisions without regard for personal safety

Causes:

This form of major or mild neurocognitive disorder is caused by Alzheimer's disease. Age is the strongest risk factor associated with Alzheimer's disease. There are also very rare causative Alzheimer's genes that can be hereditary and can increase an individual's likelihood of developing the disease. Traumatic brain injury also increases the risk of an individual developing major or mild neurocognitive disorder due to Alzheimer's disease.