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Editorial

Dementia: A Comprehensive Overview

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Abstract

Dementia is a progressive neurological syndrome characterized by a decline in memory, cognitive abilities, and functional capacity that interferes with daily life. As global life expectancy increases, dementia has emerged as one of the fastest-growing public health challenges, affecting millions of older adults worldwide. The condition encompasses several disorders, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia. Early diagnosis, risk-factor modification, and multidisciplinary care approaches remain essential for managing disease progression and improving patient quality of life. This article provides an overview of the etiology, symptoms, risk factors, diagnostic strategies, and current management practices for dementia.

Keywords: Dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Cognitive decline, Neurodegeneration, Aging, Memory loss, Geriatric medicine, Vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, Neurocognitive disorders

Introduction

Dementia represents a group of neurocognitive disorders that primarily affect older adults and significantly impair cognitive function, behavior, and the ability to perform everyday tasks. Globally, more than 55 million people are living with dementia, a number expected to rise sharply with population aging. Alzheimer's disease accounts for approximately 60 to 70 percent of cases, making it the most common form [1,2].

The onset of dementia is typically insidious, beginning with subtle memory lapses and progressing to profound deficits in language, reasoning, judgment, and psychomotor skills. The condition imposes a major social, emotional, and economic burden on families and healthcare systems [3,4]. While age remains the strongest risk factor, genetics, vascular health, lifestyle patterns, and environmental exposures contribute significantly to disease development.

Early diagnosis is pivotal because it enables better symptom control, advanced care planning, and the implementation of non-pharmacological interventions that help maintain independence. Advances in neuroimaging, biomarkers, and cognitive testing have improved diagnostic accuracy, although curative treatments remain elusive. Management currently focuses on slowing functional decline, addressing behavioral symptoms, and supporting caregivers through multidisciplinary care models [5].

Conclusion

Dementia continues to pose a significant challenge to public health systems as global populations age. Although no definitive cure exists, early recognition and comprehensive care strategies can greatly improve the quality of life for affected individuals. Preventive approaches, such as controlling cardiovascular risk factors, maintaining cognitive and physical activity, and promoting social engagement, are vital in reducing disease risk and progression. Ongoing research into biomarkers, genetics, and novel therapies offers hope for improved outcomes in the coming decades. Collaborative efforts between healthcare providers, policymakers, and caregivers are essential to manage the growing burden of dementia effectively.

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