



آغا خان یونیورسٹی

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY



World Health
Organization

Protecting the Rights of
Older People with Disabilities

DEMENTIA

in older people

Dementia is a progressive disease of the brain and is common amongst older people. It is characterised by three key features: forgetfulness, poor reasoning and thinking process, and changes in behavioural patterns.



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WHAT ARE THE CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS OF DEMENTIA?

Although age is the biggest known risk factor of dementia, it may not be the only cause. Other risk factors include:



Physical Illness

Diabetes, Hypertension
Genetic problems or
Hypercholesterolemia



Mental Illness

Spells of depression
or serious brain injury



Unhealthy Habits

Sedentary lifestyle
and bad habits like
smoking.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEMENTIA?

Dementia affects each person differently. Its progressive nature and signs and symptoms can be understood in the following three stages. The severity of the signs tends to increase continuously alongside development of new signs.



Stage 1

- Forgetfulness or loss of short term memory
- Poor socialisation, and depression
- Increased suspicion, anxiety, and purposeless wandering
- Indecisiveness and lack of interest in doing chores



Stage 2

- Aggression and agitation
- Difficulty finding the right words
- Requiring assistance in routine activities such as toileting, eating and dressing, etc.
- Inability to retain new information



Stage 3

- Decreased physical strength
- Inability to walk
- Difficulty in doing routine activities
- Urinary incontinence or unintentional urination

HOW TO OFFER SUPPORT AND HELP TO DEMENTIA PATIENTS?

Dementia does not only affect the patient, it can be equally overwhelming for their families and caregivers. However, there is a lot that can be done to help improve the quality of life of someone with dementia, including:



Medical Care

- Identifying the early signs and symptoms for timely care
- Seeking medical care by seeing a doctor for proper treatment and advice
- Supervising intake of medicines



Healthy Environment

- Offering a comfortable and supportive environment at home
- Avoiding getting into any arguments with them
- Speaking to the patient in a clear and soft tone



Physical Activities

- Maintaining a regular schedule for meals, sleep time, physical activities and hygiene
- Accompanying them wherever they go and providing walking aids
- Encouraging the patient to socialise



Emotional Bond

- Remaining calm and patient with them
- Deepening your bond and connecting with them emotionally
- Helping orient the patient with time, place and people.