

PHARMAC Seminar Series

“Managing your patient
who has dementia”

“The Journey with Dementia”

Before it starts.....

- ▶ Risk Factors
- ▶ Prevention
- ▶ Interventions

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“What’s wrong with her,
doc?”

- ▶ Studies show patients and families value early diagnosis
- ▶ Not so health professionals

(Most families and many patients
know what is wrong already)

Is this dementia?

- ▶ Clinical history
- ▶ Collateral history

Differential Diagnosis

- ▶ Delirium
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Physical illness
- ▶ Medication/alcohol induced
- ▶ Long standing deficits
- ▶ Chronic mental illness

Reversible factors

- ▶ Consider them
- ▶ What you do depends on age, general health, circumstances etc.

Cognitive testing

- ▶ Confirmatory - not diagnostic
- ▶ Take your pick
- ▶ MMSE, MOCA, Addenbrooke's

(It is not the score – it is where the errors are)

Investigations

- ▶ Bloods
- ▶ Imaging (what brain looks like)
- ▶ ECG
- ▶ EEG
- ▶ Neuropsychological assessment (how the brain works)

So, what do I do now?

- ▶ Explain diagnosis, prognosis
(Tell the truth - be straight)
- ▶ Usually you are telling people what they already know
- ▶ What they really want to know is
“what can we do about it?”

And then?

- ▶ Social supports
- ▶ Environmental modification
- ▶ Activities
- ▶ Education/information
- ▶ Ongoing messages regarding perpetuating factors
- ▶ Medical interventions

And

- ▶ Driving
- ▶ EPOA
- ▶ Wills
- ▶ Do things sooner rather than later!
- ▶ Cultural aspects
- ▶ Vulnerability to exploitation
- ▶ Advanced Directives?

Social supports

- ▶ Family
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Community
- ▶ NASC
- ▶ Alzheimer's Society

Environmental modification

- ▶ Simple
- ▶ Structured
- ▶ Cues
- ▶ Remove complicating/confusing elements
- ▶ Disable appliances?

Activities

- ▶ Social
- ▶ Physical
- ▶ Mental

Education

- ▶ Patient
- ▶ Family