



Memory Management Program

Definition of dementia: Dementia is a disorder that affects a person's ability to remember, reason and communicate. It can be associated with behavioral changes.

Alzheimer's disease: Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. Other causes of dementia include multiple strokes, degenerative diseases that resemble Parkinson's disease, vitamin deficiencies, thyroid or electrolyte abnormalities. Depression can mimic Alzheimer's disease.

Prevalence of the disease: About four million Americans have Alzheimer's disease. Approximately 10% of the population over the age of 65 years and half of those over 85 years have the disease. The female to male ratio is approximately 2:1. A family history of Alzheimer's disease increases the risk of the disease four-fold.

Diagnosis: Other diseases that cause the same symptoms as Alzheimer's must be ruled out before a probable diagnosis of Alzheimer's can be made. A definite diagnosis can only be made by examination of the brain tissue at autopsy. The evaluation of Alzheimer's is made through a complete health history, physical examination, written and verbal memory tests, laboratory evaluation, and an imaging study of the brain called a CAT scan or MRI scan.