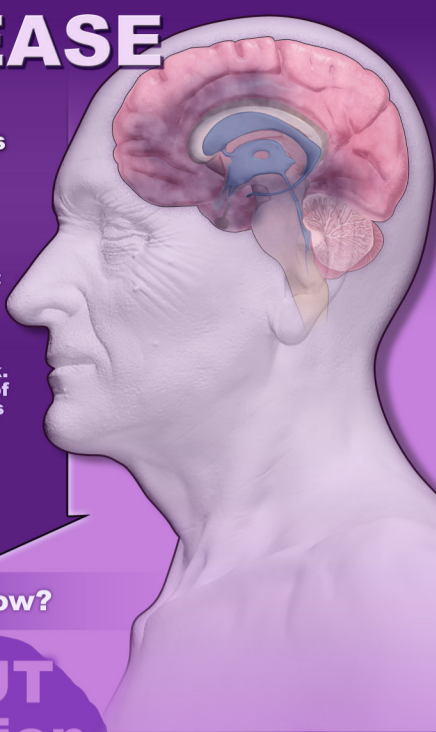


ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of the syndrome that doctors call "dementia", which means loss of the ability to think. About 2/3rds of all dementia is due to Alzheimer's disease.



Did You Know?

ABOUT 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's today



Did You Know?

1/2 of ALL Americans over age 85 have Alzheimer's disease



Did You Know?

Each patient with Alzheimer's disease will cost the patient's family about

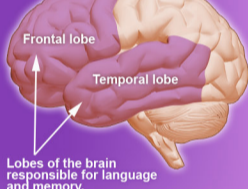


\$1 million dollars

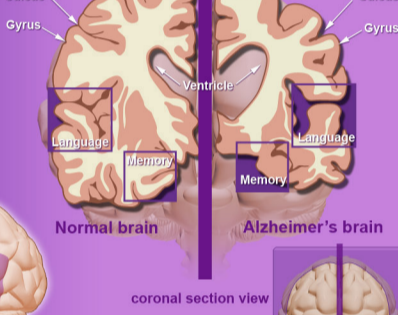
Does everyone who lives long enough develop dementia?

No, there are people known as "supercentenarians" who have lived to be 120 years old with completely intact cognition and without any brain pathology changes of Alzheimer's.

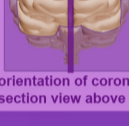
Comparative cross-sections of the brain showing normal vs. Alzheimer's brain degenerative changes



Lobes of the brain responsible for language and memory.



coronal section view



orientation of coronal section view above

How is Alzheimer's diagnosed?

For 100 years, the diagnosis has been based on the presence of a typical clinical picture (more on that below) and exclusion of other diseases that can cause dementia secondarily.

Depression, endocrine abnormalities, immune system abnormalities, brain infections, brain tumors, obstruction of spinal fluid flow, head trauma, and vitamin deficiencies represent most such diseases that can mimic Alzheimer's.

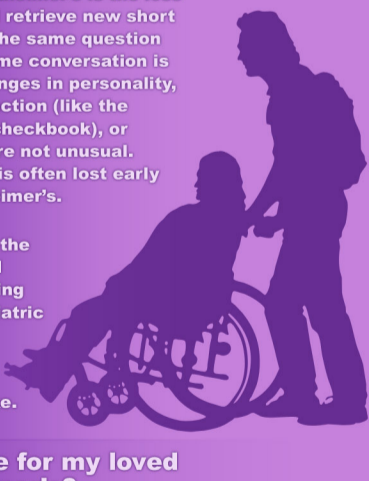
Also, in the past, the diagnosis of Alzheimer's could only be confirmed at autopsy. Recently a new spinal fluid test and a new brain scan, known as an amyloid PET scan, were approved for confirming the diagnosis of Alzheimer's during life.



When do I worry that a loved one might have Alzheimer's?

The typical picture of Alzheimer's is the loss of the ability to form and retrieve new short term memories. Asking the same question repeatedly within the same conversation is a common example. Changes in personality, changes in executive function (like the ability to balance one's checkbook), or agitation and paranoia are not unusual. Insight into the problem is often lost early on in the course of Alzheimer's.

Often, loved ones notice the changes but the affected person never sees anything wrong. This is not psychiatric denial. This is a loss of neurological function similar to loss of arm or leg function after a stroke.



What can be done for my loved ones with Alzheimer's?

There are two types of medication approved for Alzheimer's. The most popular of these, known as cholinesterase inhibitors, are based on research from Mount Sinai.

Aricept, Exelon, and Razadyne are the trade names of these drugs. Another class of drug is represented by Namenda. All of these help symptoms modestly in some patients, but everyone with Alzheimer's inevitably progresses to what is called a "vegetative state" in which they take to bed, cease to interact with the environment, and eventually die due to pneumonia or some similar illness.



Mount Sinai is one of 35 Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers commissioned by the National Institutes of Health to perform expert diagnosis and to test new experimental drugs that are aimed at slowing or preventing Alzheimer's.

