

Thinking into Dementia notes

some statistics

World wide 131.5 million

UK 850,000

1.3% of population

1 in five over 65's

1 in four over 80's

over age 65 - have 1 in 3 chance of developing dementia



its not one disease

it a term which describes a group of diseases that involve memory, communication, reasoning

some common feature

progressive

starts with memory problem but will affects all areas of brain function

affects ability to remember, think, reason, and leads to disorientation and eventually an inability to communicate.

total brain failure and death – last year it has become the leading cause of death in UK overtaking deaths from cardiovascular disease such as heart attacks and strokes

Types of dementia

Alzheimer's disease - 70%

commonest type of dementia

Features are progressive brain death, the brain scan shows fewer brain cells, fewer connections within the brain and overall size of brain shrinks.

Within the brain there are plaques and within the cells tangles
Specific gene mutation in early onset

Vascular - 20%

Cerebrovascular disease – multiple mini strokes all over brain.
Related to high blood pressure and raised cholesterol.
Commoner in diabetics and people with heart disease.

Others - 10%

Lewy body 4% - protein deposits within the brain

Dementia associated with Parkinson's disease 2%

Fronto-temporal dementia (Pick's disease)

Head injury – especially repetitive – eg boxing

Prion diseases such as CJD - eg "mad cow disease"

HIV

Down's syndrome – have a much higher and earlier onset of usually Alzheimer disease

Inherited disease such as Huntingdon's Chorea

Other things that mimic dementia

Depression

Thyroid disease

infections – especially water infections

constipation

side effects of medication

Vitamin B12 deficiency

subdural haematoma

social isolation

Models of dementia

Person focused model

look for what someone can do and enable them to do as much as possible

Medical model

brain degeneration -> brain dysfunction-> altered behaviour

no cure help, no hope

Dementia affects every aspect of life

memory

emotions

vision

speech

organisation

logic

spacial awareness

body control

behaviour

personality



memory

long and short

explicit and implicit

behaviour

event

verbal reasoning

What does it mean?

event

non-verbal reasoning

Am I safe?

personality and personhood

‘they have died but their body’s still here’

‘the lights are on but there’s nobody in’

‘its just a shell of my mother’

‘they are not the person they were’

Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaviour

Personhood refers to what makes a person, a person

Buber relationship

i - it

does he take sugar/

i - thou

do you take sugar

Plato, Socrates, and Descartes 'I think therefore I am
but if I don't think am I nothing?

Existentialist philosophers.

such as Kierkegaard, Satre, Kant and Tillich with focuses more on the individual rather than society.

Tillich stated that personhood would only totally be defined when there was a relationship with the divine

Utilitarian philosophers

such as Mill, Bentham and Locke
that the value of human action is dependent on its contribution to the happiness of humankind. 'the greatest good for the greatest number' and that value determines personhood.

Personhood relational

the infant - a kind of developing personhood, imagined and projected by carers

the adult - full personhood co-constructed with other members of society

and finally of "fading personhood" - in constant need of being re-constructed and restored with the assistance of carers and society. Myser (2007)

People who come into contact with a person with dementia need to look for the person and not just at the dementia.

"Being a "person" is the fundamental philosophical and sociological position of a human being, with value, intelligence, a history and a present. The challenge in dementia is to continue to seek for and not to dismiss that person." Lawrence 2008

Personhood - adding a Christian perspective

image of God Let us make humankind

in our image according to our likeness (Gen 1:26)

Tillich - Being made in the image of God personhood is defined by the relationship between the human and the divine

Tillich - The name of [the] infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of our being is *God*.

God as community

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Being made in the image of God personhood is defined as being part of community

Barth

Without his fellow-man, he cannot be that which he would obviously like to be when he withdraws into himself ... if he will not give himself to the other, he himself withers and perishes.'

Christ on the cross supremely human - shows capacity in incapacity.

Body of Christ

Some parts of the body that seem the weakest and the least important are actually the most necessary.

What does having dementia mean?

Every person with dementia will be different but there are some steps that are recognisable on their journey through dementia.

the steps tend to happen in a certain order but not always some types of dementia will have steps that are much commoner and occur earlier in the journey.

eg Lewy Body dementia often involves vivid hallucinations as an early symptom

'I don't remember, I don't recall'

mild cognitive impairment
repeating things - stories etc,

misplacing and losing things,
forget conversations and new information,
losing train of thought in conversation or thread of
conversation
forgetting to do daily repetitive tasks eg take tablets
overwhelmed in decision making
losing track of time
tests at GP, specialist look at that
prime minister, address, three objects, take 7 away from 100,
draw clock at ten to ten

‘There’s someone in my head but its not me!’

denial
blame and anger
frustration
pacing and fidgeting

‘I don’t know what to read, write or say

expressive aphasia
receptive aphasia
anomic aphasia
global aphasia

‘When men get up on the chessboard and angels are in the wardrobe’

Hallucinations – auditory, visual and complex
can be frightening but often if it is of a loved one
who has died they can be comforting.

‘confusion never stops, closing walls and ticking clocks’

Paranoia - often about money,
being put away,
being poisoned

‘how you suffered for your sanity’

Mood swings – limbic system becomes involved

uncontrollable crying,
aggression,
inappropriate hilarity

‘don’t know if its day or night’

day/night reversal

sundowning - early evening agitation

‘I can’t find my way home

wandering

constantly trying to get up or out of bed to go somewhere

different from pacing

‘I keep falling over’

gait changes – shuffling

balance problems – cerebellum involvement

fatigue, physical weakness and stiffness

clutter, medication

‘help me to live with dignity to the end ’

incontinence and toileting, bathing and grooming

dressing and feeding

and through it all ‘Let me know I am loved’

Story of Emmaus - immediacy of the moment

Worship simple not simplistic

childlike not childish

worship with people with dementia not worship for people

with dementia

I refuse to become a victim, to succumb to the lie of dementia, that as my cognition fades, so too must my spirituality. I will trust in the Holy Spirit within me, and the fellowship of the Body of Christ around me, to help me make this journey. My soul remains my mainstay, as I travel this path of making meaning in life, and of discovering the glory of God within me.' - Christine Bryden,

Lest they forget Peter Wallis

Take the elements of their ordinary life,
a vase from foreign parts,
leaving a ring of polish on the shelf.

Take a song once known by heart,
'Since you've been gone' by Nina Simone,
or take something else.

Hold it in your head, whatever it is.
Secure a list of favourites,
their food – pink shrimps, perhaps;

the colour that they always chose to wear
when going out or when they went out last –
cerise, magenta, leaf, turquoise,

the latest one from 'Marks'. Take a phrase that
makes them laugh, repeat as necessary –
'topsy over' from the children's past?

Lest they forget, have in your grasp
for future use or use immediate,
the vase, song, shade, and laugh.