As If You Weren't Dealing With Enough: Dementia in the Time of COVID-19: A Webinar for Health Systems and Health Professionals
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Overarching Goals

• Raise awareness of the potential issues COVID-19 may have on people living with dementia and their caregivers

• Identify opportunities for healthcare systems to prepare for COVID-19 and patients with dementia and their family caregivers

• Discuss how patients with dementia may present COVID-19

• Identify opportunities for professionals to help families affected by dementia prepare for COVID-19
COVID-19 and Dementia: Unique Considerations

- **Age of patients with dementia**
  - Most PWD over age 65
  - Older age = poorer outcome

- **Co-existing conditions**
  - Risk factor for more aggressive infection
COVID Overview (China; N=72,134)

Case distribution
- Mild 81% - no or mild pneumonia
- Severe 14% – dyspnea, hypoxia, >50% lung involvement by imaging
- Critical 5% - respiratory failure, shock, multiorgan dysfunction

Hospitalization
- ICU admission: 1-20%
- Intubation: 3-10%

Deaths
- Overall: 2.2%
- Median time from symptom onset: 14 days (shorter in those >70 yrs)

Reference: Keck USC 2020
COVID in US Patients > 65 yrs

Predictors of disease severity

• >50 yrs of age
• Smoking
• Co-morbidities
  • COPD
  • Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)
  • Cerebrovascular disease

Co-morbid cardiovascular disease increases risk of death

Reference: CDC 2020
COVID-19 and Dementia: Unique Considerations

- **Role of caregivers**
  - Need to identify family caregiver/person who provides hands on care
  - Dementia care = dyad care
COVID-19 and Dementia: Lessons Learned From China

• Changes seen in cognition, behavior, and function
• Impact on PWD differ by location
• Impact on family/caregivers differ by location

1. H. Wang. Dementia Care During the COVID 19 Outbreak, Chines J of Psychiatry 2020;53

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zM6cd1QSSFo
COVID-19 and Dementia: Impact of Public Health Regulations

Social distancing
Boredom and loneliness
• Anxiety, irritability, agitation

Infection control
Poor understanding
• Uncooperative
• Confusion

Stay at Home
Unscheduled daily life
• Increased naps
• Sleep problems
• Wandering and pacing

Closer family observation
• Increased awareness of limitations
COVID-19 and Dementia: Home

• Majority of PWD live at home
• Inability to understand epidemic
  • Confusion
  • Irritability and agitation
  • Sleep difficulty
COVID-19 and Dementia: Home

• Changes in home care arrangements
  • Routines disrupted
  • Change in caregivers
    • New caregivers & shared caring with more family at home
    • Usual caregivers unable to work or replaced
COVID-19 and Dementia: Hospital & ICU

Environment: Isolation + Gowns & Masks + Machines/Noise

- Confusion
- Insecurity
- Sleep problems
- Anxiety
- Agitation
- Hostility
Hospital & ICU: Consideration for patients with dementia

HaSharon Hospital in Petah Tikva, Israel
Clinical Presentation of COVID-19 in a Patient with Dementia

- Cognition
  - Increased confusion
  - Slower processing
- Function
  - Decline in usual abilities
- Behavior
  - Anxiety/Agitation/Aggression
  - Apathy/Depression/Fatigue/Increased sleep
Clinical Presentation of COVID-19 in a Patient with Dementia

• Hypoxia presents with **Delirium**
  • Change in consciousness
  • Impaired attention
  • Sleep/wake cycle disturbance
  • Hallucinations
  • Emotional disturbances
Mrs. C phones and informs provider that Mr. C who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s (mild/early stage) fell in the bathroom 3 days ago, has been in bed sleeping a lot, is more confused, today has a cough and fever of 100.0 F. She is worried he may have COVID-19 and not sure what to do.
Preparing Healthcare Systems

• What plans are in place within your healthcare system for **people with dementia**?
  • Patients with known MCI or dementia diagnosis
  • Patients with dementia without a diagnosis
  • Patients without identified cognitive problem who present with delirium
Preparing Healthcare Systems

• What plans are in place within your healthcare system for caregivers?
  • Identification of patients who are caregivers
  • Additional support for caregivers of PWD
Preparing Healthcare Systems

• Have you considered the **cultural context**?
  • Family central and essential for providing care
  • Altruism when family member ill
  • Belief that health will be restored
  • Power of prayer
  • Belief in God
Mr. F is in the hospital with COVID-19. He also has mid-stage Alzheimer’s. Mr. F’s family believes it is important to be by the bedside of a loved one when they are ill. This is especially important because Mr. F can become agitated when he is in an unfamiliar environment and with unfamiliar people.
Helping Families Prepare

• Advanced Healthcare Directives
  • PWD
    • Who is decision-maker?
    • What is plan if patient becomes ill?
• Caregiver
  • Who is decision-maker?
  • Who will care for PWD?
Helping Families Prepare

- Planning ahead if a **person with dementia gets sick**
  - Signs and symptoms
    - **PWD may be unable to verbally articulate symptoms**
  - Who to call?
  - When to call?
  - Have documents ready in one place
Helping Families Prepare

• Planning ahead if a **person with dementia gets sick**
  • If PWD needs to be quarantined at home, how will caregiver minimize exposure?
  • What conversations need to occur with family, friends, neighbors, etc. to support caregiver?
Helping Families Prepare

- Planning ahead if a caregiver gets sick
  - Who will care for PWD?
  - Where will PWD be cared for?
  - Medication management for PWD?
  - How is self-quarantine to be done for caregiver?
Helping Families Prepare

• Helping caregivers create a routine and schedule to minimize patient anxiety and behavioral issues
  • Develop in-home activity plan
  • Maintain daily routine
    • Regularly schedule meal times
    • Schedule activities throughout the day
    • Limit day-time naps
    • Anticipate behavior changes
Helping Families Prepare

• Challenging – if not impossible - to maintain social distancing
  • PWDs often shadow caregiver
  • Use of gloves and masks can be frightening to PWD
  • Observing infection control guidelines requires frequent repetition
Alzheimer’s Los Angeles Support

• Alzheimer’s Los Angeles Helpline (844) HELP.ALZ/(844) 435-7259
• www.alzheimersla.org
• Web Chats
• Care Counselors available to provide individualized dementia-specific support and education to families
Alzheimer’s Los Angeles Support

- Telephonic support groups
- Online and telephonic Alzheimer’s classes
- Online caregiver education classes

For more information, to RSVP, or to schedule a class, call Alzheimer’s Los Angeles Helpline at (844) 435-7259
Alzheimer’s Los Angeles Support

ALZ Direct Connect Referral Program is up and running for dementia-specific needs

Download referral form at: www.alzheimersla.org/alzdirectconnect
Alzheimer’s Los Angeles Support

COVID-19 Caregiver Tip Sheets

• Good Hygiene
• Planning Ahead
• Routine and Activities
• Managing Stress and Well-Being

To download tip sheets:
www.alzheimersla.org/covid-caregiver-tip-sheets
Webinar slide deck will be available at:

www.alzheimersla.org/covid-webinars
QUESTIONS?
Please type questions into chat