



Keck School of Medicine of **USC**
Geriatric Healthcare Collective



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 China¹

- 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

Partnering with healthcare and aging service providers to improve care and support for people with Alzheimer's or dementias & their families

ALZ DIRECT CONNECT allows healthcare and aging services providers to directly link patients/clients and families to Alzheimer's Los Angeles for:

- access to care coordination & psychosocial support
- referrals to supportive services
- help with understanding the disease & navigating its progression
- a 360 approach to care through feedback to the referring provider



844.HELP.ALZ • AlzheimersLA.org

ALZ DIRECT CONNECT does not fulfill mandatory legal reporting requirements for healthcare professionals. Alzheimer's Los Angeles maintains high professional & ethical standards for care & safety and therefore reports any and all allegations or suspicions of elder abuse and/or child abuse.

See reverse side for ALZ Direct Connect Referral Form 

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

[Download referral form at:](#)

www.alzheimersla.org/alzdirectconnect



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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



Experts think that COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person. Right now, one of the best ways to not get COVID-19 is to practice good hygiene. That means washing your hands and keeping your house germ-free.

It can be hard for someone with dementia to practice good hygiene because he or she may forget or get confused. Caregivers should try to be patient and may need to repeat things over and over again.

WASH HANDS WELL & OFTEN



- Make sure everyone washes their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Try singing "Happy Birthday" two times to make sure you are washing your hands long enough. Have the person with dementia sing with you!
- Keep hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) with you, in case you can't wash your hands with soap and water. This may be a good way to make sure the hands

**Webinar slide deck will be
available at:**

www.alzheimersla.org/covid-webinars

QUESTIONS?

Please type questions into chat