

Dementia

Dementia is an illness that occurs when certain diseases damage the brain. Dementia attacks the nerve cells known as neurones in the brain these neurones are used for sending messages to and from the brain, allowing our organs to communicate when these get damaged the human body is unable to function normally causing loss of cognitive functioning this allows us the ability to think, remember, and reason. Overtime a person suffering with dementia could experience memory loss, visual impairment, have trouble in language skills and problem solving, they could become unable to uphold their self-management, and the ability to focus and pay attention. Some people with dementia cannot control their emotions, and their personalities may change. (National Institute on Aging, 2019).

Alzheimer's disease is said to be the main most common cause of people suffering with dementia along with vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, frontotemporal dementia and mixed dementia (where a person has more than one of the diseases). Whilst these are the most common types there are over 200 subtypes of dementias. Dementia can happen to anybody at any time but is most common in people over the age of 65. If a person develops the illness before this age it is then known as young onset dementia. No person will experience dementia in one certain way depending on the severity of the disease and what part of the brain is damaged will determine the symptoms experienced. (Dementia UK, 2019).

There are more than two new cases per 1000 people Within the age group 65–69 years, each year. This number increases almost exponentially with increasing age, until over the age of 90 years, out of 1000 persons, 70 new cases of dementia can be expected every year. High risk factors or dementia include high age, the female sex, whereas genetic factors and vascular risk factors also play an important role. (Berr, Wancata and Ritchie, 2005)

600,000-800,000 people have dementia in the UK. One in six people over 80 have dementia and Only 43% of people with dementia have actually been diagnosed. (Ageuk.org.uk, 2019)

In our recent group discussion, there were points made that came to my attention firstly how important awareness is when it comes to dementia, whilst there are organisations in place that do raise awareness of dementia each we all agreed that more could be done to make understanding dementia a lot more heard. In order for us to help those living with the condition lead a better life we need to have a better understanding of the illness. When people feel supported, valued and safe it gives them a sense of purpose this then enables them to live a higher quality of life. More research would also be beneficial to learn more about preventative measures, treatments and faster diagnosis. Also, to find out what the main causes of dementia are. (24 Hour In Home Care, 2019)

Not many people understand the effects dementia has on the global economy or the strain it puts on family and friends. (Alzheimer's Research UK, 2019) States that the economic impact of dementia is costing £26billion a year, with £5.8 billion in social care costs this was covered by the individual suffering dementia and their carers. Supporting a person suffering with dementia can be very challenging, watching someone you love deteriorate can be a very upsetting time not to mention draining. The support given needs to be shared and not taken on by one person too much stress is harmful for both the carer and the sufferer. Relationships could change, loved ones no longer see themselves as partner or family member they begin to just see them self as a carer causing their relationship to break down which is why it's important close members of the sufferer seek additional support. Caring for someone with dementia you are more likely to become more depressed and stressed with the less support you have. There are organisations such as voluntary, health and social care professionals and local authorities that offer support. Many medical institutions offer groups for families and patients, whilst all dementia patients experience dementia in different ways they will all need to express their frustrations, joys and fears. These groups are held so the patient and the carers will know they are not suffering alone and there are others out there going through the same situation. And make you aware of other support available. (PsychGuides.com, 2019)

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