

Degenerative disorders

Symptoms inventory

Education
Occupation

Memory:
Peoples' names
Recent conversations
Misplace objects

Change in:
Behavior
Personality
Affect/ mood
Social interactions
Interests
Hobbies
Involvement in activities

Current abilities:
ADLs
Finances and business

Psychiatric:
Mood
Hallucinations
Delusions
Obsessions
Phobias

Mode of onset of problems:

Pregression: stepwise/steady

Language/communication skills

Improvement?

TABLE 2-7 Trigger Symptoms That May Indicate Dementia

Does the person have increased difficulty with any of the activities listed below?

Learning and retaining new information: is more repetitive; has trouble remembering recent conversations, events, appointments; frequently misplaces objects

Handling complex tasks: has trouble following a complex train of thought or performing tasks that require many steps such as balancing a checkbook or cooking a meal

Reasoning ability: is unable to respond with a reasonable plan to problems at work or home, such as knowing what to do if the bathroom is flooded; shows uncharacteristic disregard for rules of social conduct

Spatial ability and orientation: has trouble driving, organizing objects around the house, finding his or her way around familiar places

Language: has increasing difficulty with finding the words to express what he or she wants to say and with following conversations

Behavior: appears more passive and less responsive; is more irritable than usual; is more suspicious than usual; misinterprets visual or auditory stimuli

In addition to a patient's failure to arrive at the right time for appointments, the clinician can look for a patient's difficulty discussing current events in an area of interest and changes in behavior or dress. It also may be helpful to follow up on areas of concern by asking the patient or family members relevant questions.

Positive findings in any of these areas generally indicate the need for further assessment for the presence of dementia.

Modified with permission from Small GW, Rabins PV, Barry PP, et al. Diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer disease and related disorders. Consensus statement of the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry, the Alzheimer's Association, and the American Geriatrics Society. JAMA 1997;278:1363-1371. Copyright © 1997, American Medical Association. All rights reserved.