

Vascular Dementia

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Dealing with dementia as a terminal illness

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Western cultures are notoriously death denying and this applies equally to people in later life who are often living with multiple chronic illnesses, dementia being one. Dementia, though known to be a terminal illness is rarely discussed as such and the grief a person and their family experience on receipt of a diagnosis of dementia is often under explored by health professionals. Health professionals often feel ill-equipped to undertake “difficult conversations” with patients and their families and so their grief goes unaddressed and end of life issues remain unexplored until the person enters the active dying or imminent death phase, at which time both the person and their family are ill-prepared for the palliative nature of the care that is now appropriate. In order to provide the best level of care and quality of life for people living with dementia it is essential for Health Professionals to assist them to explore their values, their fears and apprehensions and to understand what a “good death” and high level of “quality of life” looks like for each individual diagnosed with dementia. This presentation will explore the importance of Advance Care Planning, holistic care and exemplary end of life care (including exploring the issues of grief and loss) for people and their families living with dementia and the ‘road blocks’ that currently exist that prevent these conversations from happening early in the illness trajectory.

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Dementia: A new health concern for developing countries, especially Bangladesh

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Dementia is a condition with wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory and reduces a person's ability to perform everyday activities and gradually leads to death. The victims are mostly people aged 60 and above. Few years back dementia was quite unknown term for the developing country like Bangladesh where people are used to suffer with some other non-communicable disease like diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and so on. Bangladesh is currently undergoing a demographic transition and the ratio of the population 60 years and older is gradually increasing. Currently, older people account for around 7% of the country's total population, amounting to roughly 10 million people. By 2050, the 60+ population will account for 20% of the total population, a four-fold increase from the present time. It is estimated that there are about 4,60,000 people with dementia in Bangladesh in 2015 while the number will rise to 8,34,000 in 2030 and 21,93,000 by 2050 respectively. It is obvious that this problem will be a national burden very soon if proper steps are not taken. Till now as there is no formal diagnosis and treatment process for dementia in the country these people and their family has to lead a measurable life till death. In this case building awareness and providing proper care for the people with dementia can be an effective option in Bangladesh. For this, Sir William Beveridge Foundation Bangladesh, having a motto of working for a better society; paid their attention to fight against dementia throughout the country.

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