

Confirming alzheimer's disease for the forgetful mail carrier

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Alzheimer's disease: Symptoms, Diagnosis and Counseling al Affiliation

Alzheimer's disease: Symptoms, Diagnosis and Counseling

Alzheimer's disease is a medical condition that slowly affects the brain causing memory loss, difficulty in language, and reasoning. Scientifically, Alzheimer's disease is said to be caused by death of nerve cells in the brain. As a person grows older, they are more at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. In this essay, we look at a case study involving a 65 year old man exhibiting symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. We analyze his general condition in terms of symptoms; propose ways of diagnosing the actual presence of Alzheimer's disease, and the role of counseling in such a case. Hans, a 66 year old man is suffering from severe amnesia. According to Butcher, Mineka & Hooley (2009), Hans's forgetfulness started when he was about 55 years old. He would constantly forget to do his duties or would even deliver mails to the wrong people at work. Due to his inability to conduct his duties as required, Hans was forced to retire at 60 years. By this time, his family had not really noticed how forgetful Hans had become, although they had seen him become more distant and withdrawn. Hans had also progressively given up most of his lifelong hobbies.

Two years after retirement, Hans's condition deteriorated after he forgot his way home, after leading a group of friends to hike in an area he knew very well. From then on, it was now apparent that Hans was not well as he would get lost on his way home, keeping in mind that he had lived in that area for over 40 years. He even forgot appointments and could not find anything in the house. Hans had difficulty remembering his lifelong friends and other people he had known for years. Today, his wife is afraid of leaving him alone

in the house, fearing that something bad might happen to him (Butcher, Mineka, & Hooley, 2009).

In order to determine whether Hans is suffering from Alzheimer's disease, it is necessary to look at his medical history. For example, Hans could have suffered head injuries at one time that may be causing his lack of memory. Other chronic diseases such as heart disease could also be causing Hans to forget easily due to reduced blood flow to the brain. I also inquire about Hans's previous and present medication to determine whether he might have some allergic reactions to some forms of medication. I also conduct a full physical examination to test whether Hans could be having an infection that is interfering with his normal bodily functions. This physical examination is followed by laboratory tests including: blood tests and urinalysis.

A neurological examination is also useful to determine whether Hans's motor system is functional or there are defects in the nervous system. The last option to determine Alzheimer's disease in Hans is to conduct a head scan to check for any tumors and other abnormal indications of Alzheimer's disease. However, all the above tests can only show the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease not ascertain its presence 100 percent. The only sure way to positively identify Alzheimer's disease is through an autopsy.

Just like people affected by other chronic diseases, people with Alzheimer's disease need a lot of care and counseling. It is important for Hans to realize that he is not alone, even in his condition. I, therefore, assure him that all is going to be well and he should not be ashamed or embarrassed of his condition. I suggest to Hans that he should attend individual counseling, as well as family therapy with our resident psychiatrist. I explain to Hans that

the individual session will be confidential, where he can tell his fears to the psychiatrist and come up with the best treatment procedure, together. The family also needs to be counseled so that they can have a better understanding of Hans's condition. This will enable them take care of Hans better and cope with the situation as a unit.

References

Butcher, J., Mineka, S., & Hooley, J. (2009). *Abnormal Psychology*. New York: Allyn & Bacon.