The Different Faces of Alzheimer’s Disease

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Alzheimer’s Disease

Problems

Preclinical
Mild cognitive impairment
Dementia

Typical Alzheimer’s
- Early short-term memory problems

Atypical Alzheimer’s
- Early non-memory problems

Posterior cortical atrophy
(Visual variant)

Logopenic variant primary progressive aphasia
(Language variant)
Posterior Cortical Atrophy
(Visual variant)

Symptoms:
- Seeing/finding things
- Depth perception
- Driving, reading
- Color distortions, glare sensitivity

Exam Findings:
- Seeing the "whole"
- Eye movements
- Reaching objects
- Copying figures

Average time until diagnosis: 4 years

Misattributed to anxiety, stress, eye problems, or cataract surgery

Logopenic variant primary progressive aphasia
(Language variant)

Logopenic: "Lack of words"
Primary progressive aphasia: Early language problems

Symptoms:
- Word-finding difficulty
- Slower speech
- Mispronouncing or using the wrong words

Exam findings:
- Difficulty naming
- Difficulty repeating
- Sound errors

Summary
1. ~400,000 people in the US with atypical Alzheimer's disease
   - More common in early onset (<65 years old)
2. The best described atypical forms are:
   A. Posterior cortical atrophy (visual variant): seeing the "forest through the trees", finding things in front of them, depth perception, visual distortions
   B. Logopenic variant PPA (language variant): finding words, repeating and sound errors
3. Atypical forms are underdiagnosed and understudied