

October 18, 2024

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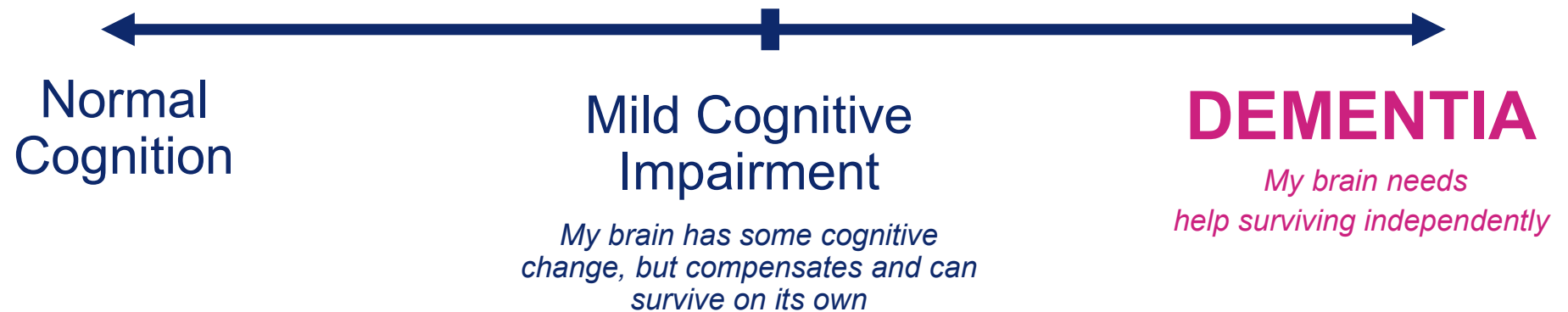
# Let's Chat About Thinking:

## Is this related to dementia, or is this a new problem?

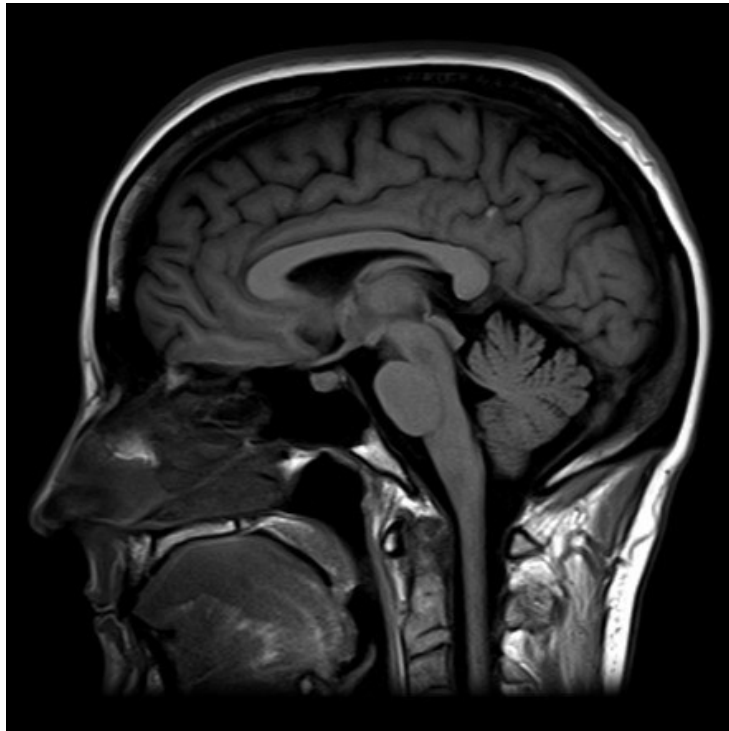
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# The Role of the Brain is to Help us Survive Independently

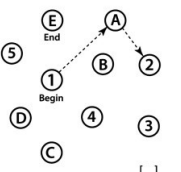


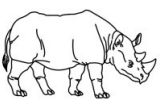



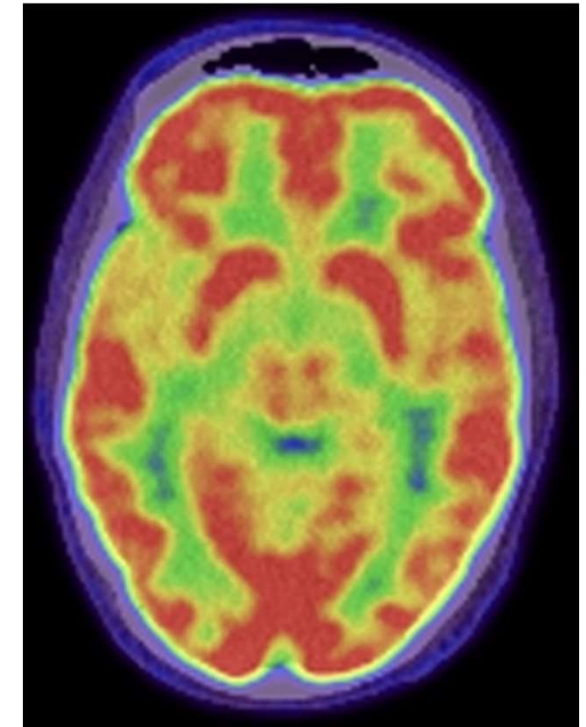
Doctors can use various tools to figure out if the cognitive change you are experiencing is the first sign of dementia, or if it is a non-dementia problem.



**MONTREAL COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT (MOCA)**  
Version 7.1 Original Version

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Education: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>VISUOSPATIAL / EXECUTIVE</b>		Copy cube	Draw CLOCK (Ten past eleven) (3 points)	POINTS
				
		Contour	Numbers	Hands
				/5
<b>NAMING</b>				
  				/3
<b>MEMORY</b>				
Read list of words, subject must repeat them. Do 2 trials, even if 1st trial is successful. Do a recall after 5 minutes.		FACE	VELVET	CHURCH
1st trial				
2nd trial				
<b>ATTENTION</b>				
Read list of digits (1 digit/ sec.). Subject has to repeat them in the forward order. No points if ≥ 2 errors.				
Subject has to repeat them in the backward order.				
Read list of letters. The subject must tap with his hand at each letter A. No points if ≥ 2 errors.				
Serial 7 subtraction starting at 100. 4 or 5 correct subtractions: 3 pts, 2 or 3 correct: 2 pts, 1 correct: 1 pt, 0 correct: 0 pt.				
<b>LANGUAGE</b>				
Repeat: I only know that John is the one to help today. [ ]				
The cat always hid under the couch when dogs were in the room. [ ]				
Fluency / Name maximum number of words in one minute that begin with the letter F. [ ] (N ≥ 11 words)				
<b>ABSTRACTION</b>				
Similarity between e.g. banana - orange = fruit. [ ] train - bicycle [ ] watch - ruler				
<b>DELAYED RECALL</b>				
Has to recall words WITH NO CUE		FACE	VELVET	CHURCH
Category cue				
Multiple choice cue				
<b>ORIENTATION</b>				
[ ] Date [ ] Month [ ] Year [ ] Day [ ] Place [ ] City				
© Z.Nasreddine MD		www.mocatest.org		
Administered by: _____		Normal ≥ 26 / 30		
		TOTAL		
		Add 1 point if ≤ 12 yr edu		



Depending on the cause, **dementias can look very different**. Some people may have hallucinations or paranoia; others have tremor or sleepiness. **Some dementias progress in a year, others last decades.**



## Specific dementias can be associated with prototypic symptoms or patterns:

### - Alzheimer's Disease

- *Repetition of stories*
- *Unawareness of symptoms*
- *Normal social cues*
- *Slow and progressive over decade*

### - Vascular Disease

- *Obstructions in blood flow, stroke*
- *Attention impairments, good days/bad days*
- *Gait abnormalities, falling*

### • Lewy Body Disease

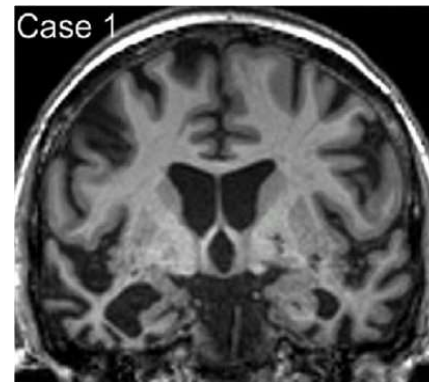
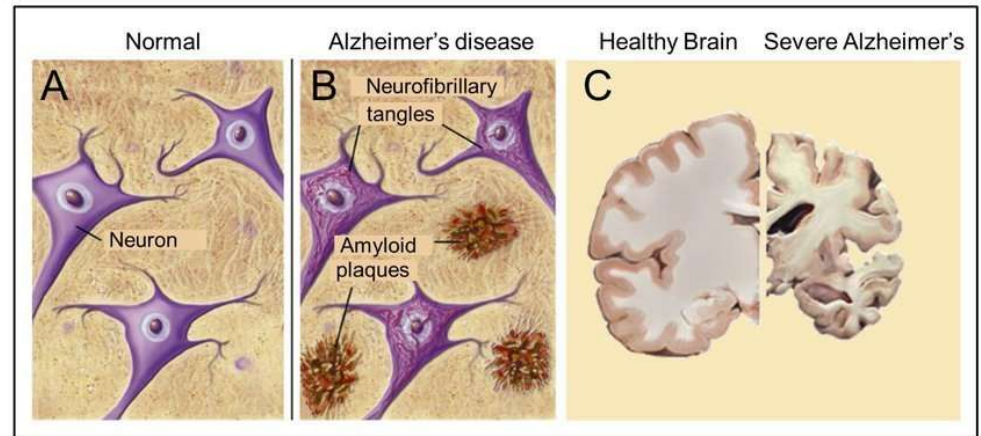
- *Visual hallucinations*
- *Fluctuating attention and alertness*
- *Parkinsonian features*
- *Sleep disturbances, dream enactment*

### - Frontotemporal Disease

- *Impulsive and obsessive behaviors*
- *Loss of empathy or apathy*
- *Not knowing what is right or wrong*

Because dementias can cause **structural and chemical changes in the brain**, there are other symptoms that may relate to dementia.

The brain helps us do **everything** from sensation, to emotional processing, to sleep regulation, to hormone balance.





Depending on what networks of the brain are affected by the disease, we can have sensory and somatic (body function) changes:

**SLEEP AND CIRCADIAN  
RHYTHM ABNORMALITIES**

- Insomnia
- Sleep-wake disturbance
- Sundowning
- Hypersomnia
- Decreased Alertness

**APPETITE, CHEWING AND  
WEIGHT LOSS**

- Dysphagia
- Increased Appetite
- Low Appetite, No Appetite
- Inability to taste or smell food
- Loss of control when eating
  - Binge eating
  - Binge drinking
  - Binge habits

**LOSS OF SENSORY  
PROCESSING**

- Inability to taste or smell food
- Inability to process textures, colors, and lights
- Loss of auditory processing
  - Difficulty understanding and processing directions
  - Hearing loss is separately associated with dementia

**COORDINATION, BALANCE  
AND WALKING**

- Movement initiation and coordination
- Balance and how to accommodate to changes in the ground
- Overall generalized weakness of the muscle

## WHAT IS USUALLY NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO DEMENTIA:

1. Infectious symptoms or immunosuppression
2. Blood in urine, stool, vomit
  - Vomiting, diarrhea, frequent urination or stooling
3. Masses, tumors, lumps or skin changes
4. Visual or hearing acuity changes (more processing)
5. Sudden changes in alertness or behavior (think stroke)
5. Seizures, shaking (though may increase risk)

Please seek alternate medical work-up if these symptoms are apparent. Often medical illness can cause DELIRIUM, which is a temporary worsening in other dementia symptoms (more confused).

This can sometimes last for a few weeks.



