Abnormal Behaviors

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

Dementia

**Description**

Dementia is a term that refers to a decline in mental abilities that can hamper daily activities of a human being. Dementia is not a specific disease, in fact, it describes a group of symptoms that can cast a negative impact on reasoning, thinking, behavior, mood, and personality (Tsai et al. 2019). According to researchers, (Tsai, 2109) (Thomas, 2018), dementia occurs when a part of brain is affected by any kind of disease or infection. There are many different types of dementia and the most common is, “Alzheimer’s disease”. Research also highlights that dementia is not a disease, in fact, it is a syndrome that is common to different brain diseases that get worse with the passage of time (Tsai et al. 2019). It is also found that the people suffering from dementia are unable to control their emotions and it may get so severe that a person has to depend on others completely.

**Prevalence rate**

The prevalence rate of dementia is 13.9% which majorly includes individuals who are 71 years or older. Age is one of the major factors in determining the prevalence of disease, taking into account that people who are older than 65 years are more at risk of getting dementia. Moreover, it occurs mostly in women as compared to men (Tsai et al. 2019). It is found that there are 3.4 million people who were suffering from mental illness in 2002 and dementia prevalence is assumed to increase by 5.0% with age (Thomas et al. 2018). Today, dementia has an occurrence rate of 37.4% on the people who are 90 years old or more. It is also inferred that African Americans have a high frequency of dementia (Tsai et al. 2019)**.**

**Age of Onset**

There are two categories, describing the onset of Alzheimer’s disease, Early-onset Alzheimer’s and Late-onset Alzheimer’s.

**Early Onset**

According to Tsai, (2019), early onset of dementia appears over the age of 65 or younger. Usually, this population is in its 50 or 40s. There are very rare cases of early-onset such as 5% of all the people who are suffering from Alzheimer’s (Tsai et al. 2019). According to the data collected from Health and Retirement Study, dementia in early age is caused by Alzheimer's disease and some other related disease such Down’s Syndrome, where the one who will get dementia may be in any of the stages, early, middle or late (Thomas et al. 2018).

**Late-onset Alzheimer’s**

It is one of the most common forms of dementia that usually occurs in people who are older than 65 years of age. This set of the disease can either run in families or not because there is no particular gene who is responsible for carrying dementia, nor there is any logical research that shows why some people get it while others don’t if dementia is caused over the passage of time (Thomas et al. 2018).

**Causes**

Burnham, (2019) has highlighted that there are different causes of dementia, where its origin can be traced from damaged nerve cells in the brain. There are different types of people suffering from dementia, taking into account the part of the brain that is damaged because when a part of brain is damaged, brain cannot communicate with other brain cells causing fluctuation in movement, thinking, memory and feelings (Burnham et al. 2019)

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**Neurogenerative causes of dementia**

It is asserted that one of the biological causes of dementia is neurodegeneration because it breaks and kills brain cells. With the passage of time, dying brain cells can cause a progressive and permanent decrease in both physical and mental functions (Burnham et al. 2019).

**Cerebrovascular Causes**

Usually, accidents such as heart disease, stroke, hardening of the blood vessels and cerebrovascular damage or the negative outcomes of malformation, hemorrhaging and blocking are some of the major causes of dementia. As a result of this damage, the localized areas of the brain are damaged and causes vascular or multi-infarct dementia (Burnham et al. 2019).

**Infection Related Dementia**

There are a lot of infections that can cause dementia such as parasitic bacteria and viruses that can destroy brain cells resulting in dementia. These cases can become severe with the passage of time (Thomas et al. 2018).

**Toxic and Metabolic causes of Dementia**

Dementia is also caused by chemical imbalance that is caused by the presence of some kind of toxins, biological conditions, and malnutrition in the body. These toxins can be drugs, adding to Leukodystrophy and Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome (Tsai et al. 2019).

**Rheumatic Causes**

Dementia is also caused by serious injuries to the brain and head, which can cause Traumatic Brain Injury (Tsai et al. 2019).

**Treatment option**

There are two treatment options that are proposed for curing dementia such as medication, and therapies. It is asserted that dementia cannot be treated, however, there are treatments that can help to control the symptoms.

**Medication**

Medication is one of the treatments that is used for treating dementia, mentioned below:

**Cholinesterase inhibitors**

The medicines such as donepezil (Aricept), galantamine (Razadyne) and rivastigmine (Exelon) work by boosting the level of chemical messengers that are involved in judgment and memory. Although there are some side effects of these medicines such as vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea, still it is prescribed (Thomas et al. 2018).

**Memantine**

Memantine, also called Namenda works by regulating the activity of glutamate as well as other chemicals that are found to be playing a role in brain function such as memory and learning. There are some cases in which memantine is prescribed along with cholinesterase inhibitors (Thomas et al. 2018).

**Other medications**

There are a lot of other medications, that are prescribed for the treatment of dementia such as those medicines which are recommended for sleep disturbance, Parkinson's disease, depression and agitation (Thomas et al. 2018).

**Involvement of the field of psychology**

There are several nondrug approaches that are used by psychologists to investigate and treat dementia, such as:

**Occupational Therapy**

An occupational therapist can help a patient suffering from dementia, make home a safe place accompanied by teaching coping behavior. The purpose of this therapy is preventing accidents such as managing behaviors, falls and preparing dementia progression (Tsai et al. 2019).

**Modifying the environment**

This therapy can help to reduce noise in surroundings so that a patient can live with attention and focus. It includes hiding threatening objects such as knives and guns. (Tsai et al. 2019).

**Simplifying tasks**

It includes breaking the task into some easier steps and focus on success, not the failure or actions that can cause failure. Therapists help people simplifying life by breaking it into simple tasks that are easy to do (Tsai et al. 2019).

**Mental Health counseling**

Mental health counseling is also one of the approaches that can help people suffering from dementia to learn to manage their emotions and behaviors. It also includes some therapies such as art therapies and music therapy sometimes accompanied by speech therapy that can support pronouncing some difficult and trouble causing words.

**Lifestyles and home remedies**

There are different home remedies and lifestyle changes that can help dementia patients improve their health such as enhanced communication, encouraging exercise, establishing nighttime rituals, keeping a calendar in terms of activities, planning for future and encouraging activities that can increase bodily coordination (Tsai et al. 2019).

All these treatments are used as per the condition of the individual and the treatment that is required by the stage of dimension.

**Preventative Measures**

There are several actions that can help to prevent dementia such as to quit smoking, adopting a healthy routine by doing plenty of exercises, eating healthy food, managing health problems such as high cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure (Thomas et al. 2018). Moreover, staying mentally alert is also one of the techniques that can help to prevent dementia such as reading books, solving puzzles, undergoing problem-solving exercise and adopting new and healthy learning habits. Moreover, increasing social exposure is also one of the strategies that can help to prevent dementia (Thomas et al. 2018).

**References**

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