



# Providence Alaska Project ECHO Dementia

Care Management: Behavioral and  
Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)

Reza Hosseini Ghomi, MD, MSE | April 4, 2022



# ECHO Clinics

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# Care Management: Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)

Monday, April 4, 2022 | 12:00-1:00 PM AKST

Virtual Conference

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## Providence Alaska Project ECHO Dementia

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# Care Management: Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia

# Agenda April 4, 2022

1. **Didactic Presentation: Behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia**
2. **Case Presentation: Management of 84-year-old dementia patient living at home**
3. **Closing Notes/ Evaluation**



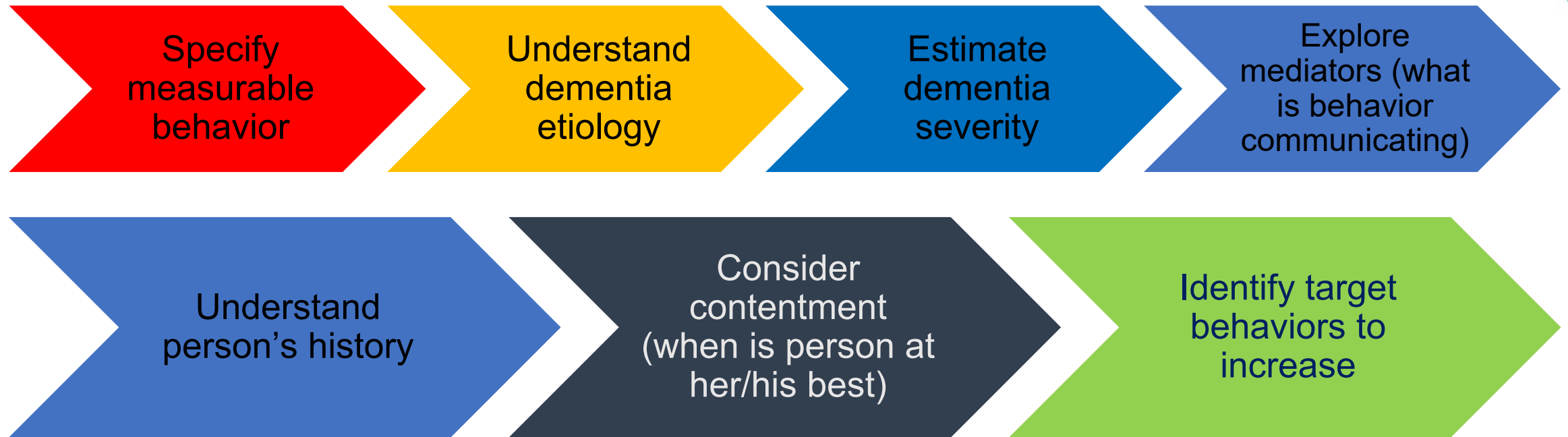
# Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Recognize common behavioral and psychological symptoms in patients with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias (ADRD)
- Recognize the importance of determining what the behavior is communicating
- Evaluate strategies for managing behavioral issues in patients with ADRD



# A Person-Centered Behavior Management Approach



# Diagnosis and Behavioral Disturbance



## **Alzheimer's Disease**

- Memory based syndromes (e.g. 'delusions')

## **Lewy Body Dementia**

- Hallucinations or sleep/wake syndromes

## **Vascular Dementia**

- Initiation and multitasking, affect regulation

## **Frontotemporal Dementias**

- Disinhibition or impulse control syndromes

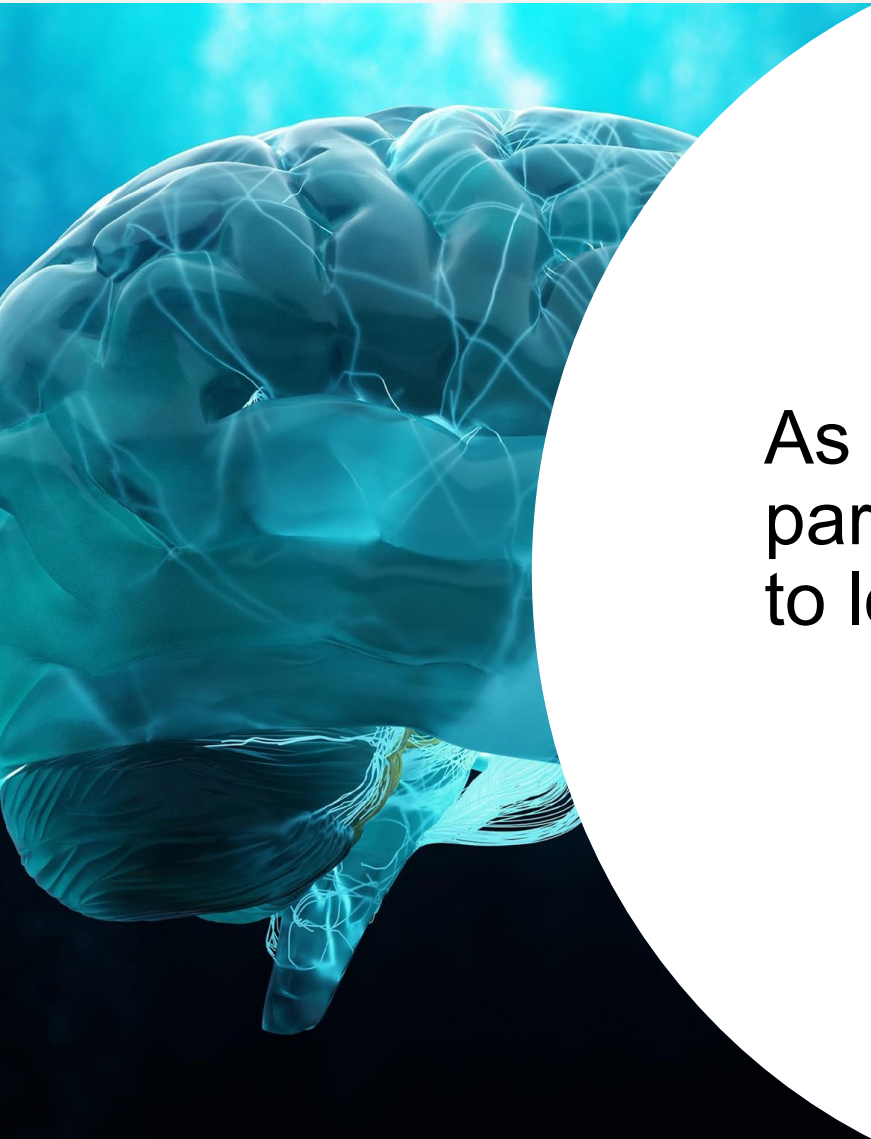
## **Depression**

- Anxiety-based syndromes

## **Alcohol, Wernicke-Korsakoffs**

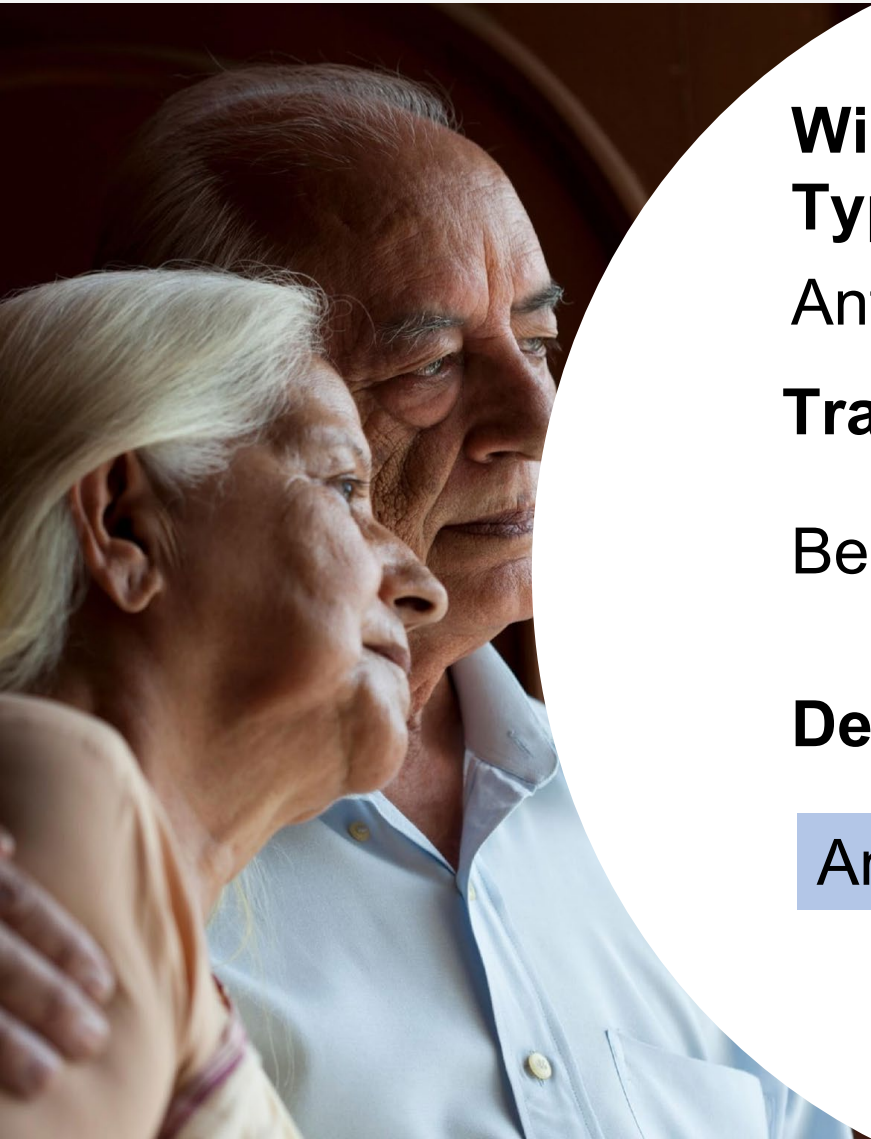
- Confabulation

# All Dementias Converge



As all degenerative dementias worsen, most parts of the brain become involved, so they begin to look more alike.

# ABCs of Behavior



## Wild Type

Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence

## Traditional Behavior Management (requires memory!)

Behavior ← Consequence

## Dementia Behavior Management

Antecedent → Behavior



# Behavior is Communication



As language skills decline, overt behavior will fill the void.

This implies that:

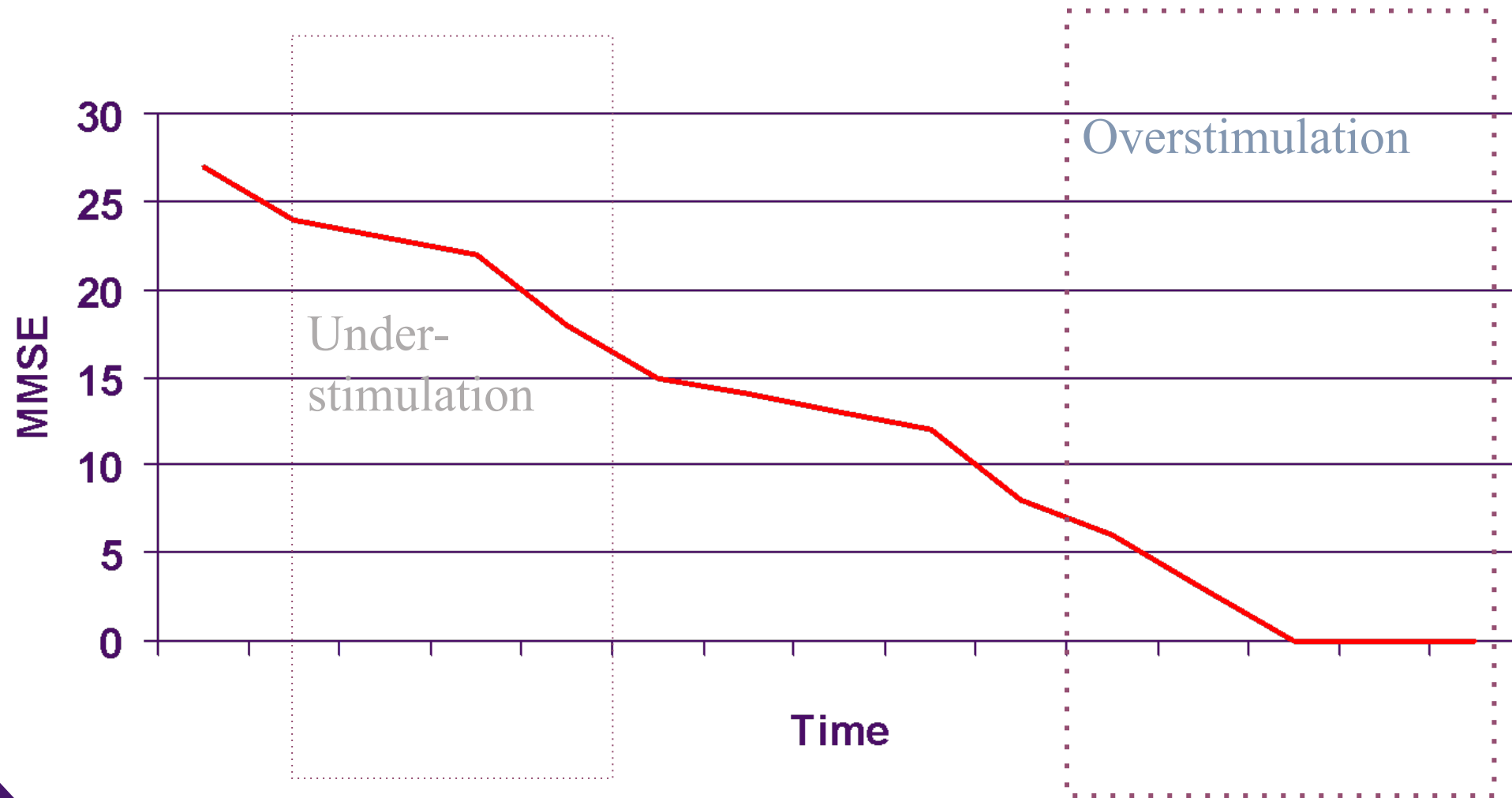
- Behavior is not random
- Behavior is adaptive for that person
- Behavior is goal directed

# What is behavior communicating?



- Pain
- Boredom
- Overstimulation
- Understimulation
- Depression
- Apprehension
- Habit

# Course of Decline





# Mediators of Challenging Behaviors in Dementia



- Physical health factors
- Psychological health factors
- Environment, task, approach
- Social history

# Cannot Create a Behavior Vacuum

- Behaviors compete in real time
- Ask when the person is at their best
- Increasing frequency of desired behaviors may reduce the frequency of undesired behaviors



# Non-Pharmaceutical Approaches

Environmental modifications: Structured routines, visual cues, reduce overstimulation (noise, clutter), optimize safety

(Gitlin LN et al. JAMA. 2012;308(19):20-9)

Pleasant activities with or without social interaction (> 10 min/day) 5 RCT: all showed benefit for agitation; those with social interaction had greater effect

Treating Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms in AD and Dementia Workshop (2013) AAGP Annual Meeting, Los Angeles; Abraha 2017 BMJ Open 7:e012759

Exercise: May reduce depressive symptoms and improve sleep; 7 RCT (mean n=134): 2/5 showed decreased depression but no benefit total NP symptoms or QOL. Improved gait.

Williams CL, Tappem RM. Aging Ment Health. 2008;12(1):72-80; Treating Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms in AD and Dementia Workshop (2013) AAGP Annual Meeting, Los Angeles; Abraha 2017 BMJ Open 7:e012759

# Non-Pharmaceutical Approaches

Music therapy: reduction in anxiety, depression, agitation, and aggression. Personalized music: 10 RCT or studies with control group. 4/7 studies showed benefit for agitation but not as much as pleasant activities with social interactions; additional benefits anxiety, total NP symptoms and QOL

Guetin S et al. Dement Geriatr Cogn Disord. 2009;28(1):36-46, 128. Abraha I, Rimland JM, Trotta FM, et al. BMJ Open. 2017;7(3):e012759. Treating Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms in AD and Dementia Workshop (2013) AAGP Annual Meeting, Los Angeles; Abraha 2017 BMJ Open 7:e012759

Cognitive stimulation therapy: aims to stabilize and improve cognitive impairment, also found to reduce apathy, depression, and overall severity of NPS Niu YX, Clin Rehabil. 2010;24(12):1102-11.

Reminiscence:

12 RCT, 7/8 studies showed benefit for depression, (no consistent findings on agitation, QOL) Treating Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms in AD and Dementia Workshop

(2013) AAGP Annual Meeting, Los Angeles; Abraha 2017 BMJ Open 7:e012759

# Non-Pharmaceutical Approaches

## Bright light therapy (RTC)

Morning and evening bright light vs. typical indoor light  
Active group showed greater agitation/aggression  
compared to baseline.

## Indoor daylight exposure

2 hours of socialization in perimeter room with daylight  
exposure (8-10 AM) in 4 LTC versus control (socialization  
in interior room)  
Lower depression in the daylight exposure group.

Dowling et al. Wes J Nurs Res 2007; 29:961-75

Konis et al. Clin Interv Aging 2018; 13:1071-1077



# Non-Pharmaceutical Approaches

Group engagement in persons with dementia : addresses need for social contact and alleviate boredom:

Reading, singing, baking, creative story-telling, brain games, active games, exercise, holiday discussion- each group session was conducted twice in randomized order.

Montessori Programming for Dementia (MPD)

Use of Montessori materials adapted for use in dementia:

Designed to promote new learning and positive forms of engagement either constructive (verbal or physical interaction) or passive (watching) . Advanced dementia patients showed more engagement and pleasure using this program

Across studies: games, singing, catching a ball, kneading dough or baking had salutary effects on mood, positive engagement and increased confidence.

Ziesel et al, 2016 AJ Alz Dis Other Disorder 31(6):502-7;  
Cohen-Mansfield et al. 2017 Psych Res 2017; 251:237-242  
Camp 2010 Nonpharmacol Ther Dement. 1(2):163-174

# Medications

- **Antidepressants:**
  - **Citalopram:** CitAD (double-blind RCT (n= 186)
    - randomized to a psychosocial intervention +/- Citalopram titrated to 30 mg
    - **significant reduction in agitation, total NPI score, and reduction of caregiver distress.**
    - citalopram- associated with QTc prolongation and 1 point decline on MMSE, more respiratory tract infections and falls
    - current recommended maximum daily dose: 20 mg



# Medications

- **Antipsychotics:**

- **Risperidone**, moderate evidence for efficacy, large evidence base. Superior to placebo for treatment of agitation and psychosis in meta-analysis; 1-2 mg/day
- **Aripiprazole**, moderate evidence for efficacy but few studies. Reduction in agitation and psychosis; small effect size; 2-15 mg /day (10 mg optimal)
- **Olanzapine**, weak evidence for efficacy, large evidence base. Meta-analysis of numerous large studies DID NOT show significant reduction in agitation or psychosis; 2.5-10 mg /day
- **Quetiapine**, weak evidence for use, no significant reduction in agitation or psychosis in three meta-analyses. 50-200 mg/day. Lower risk of mortality
- **Haloperidol**, effective in reducing aggression, but highest risk rate for mortality

# Medications

- **Anticonvulsants**

- Carbamazepine: 2 small RTC for agitation and aggression in AD over 6 weeks showed possible benefit.
- Valproate: has not been effective in individual studies or meta-analysis

- **Cholinesterase Inhibitors**

- have not been effective for agitation over 12 weeks but may have effects on depression, apathy and anxiety.

- **NMDA receptor antagonist**

- may be associated with limited benefit for neuropsychiatric symptoms over 3-6 months (but not for acute agitation) based on meta-analyses and pooled data.

As reviewed in Corbett et al.(2012) Curr Treatment Options in Neurology 14:113-125  
Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2009 Jul 8;(3):CD003945. doi: 10.1002/14651858. Cumming  
2015 JAMA 314(12):1242-1254

# Antidepressant Trial Data

Antidepressant trials for the treatment of neuropsychiatric symptoms of AD dementia (past 10 years)

	Medication	Placebo	Outcome	Measures	Mean Age	Mean MMSE	Duration Setting	N Primary results
Finkel 2004 (n=245)	Sertaline (added to Donepezil)	Yes	Behavioral symptoms	NPI, CGI-I, CGI-S	---	18.25	12 week outpt	No difference any outcome
Rosenberg 2010 (n=131)	Sertraline	Yes	Depression	mADCS-CGIC CSDD	77.3	20.0	12 week outpt	No difference any outcome
Banerjee 2011 (n=326)	Mirtazapine or Sertraline	Yes	Depression	CSDD	79	18	13 week outpt	No active vs placebo
Barak 2011 (n=40)	Escitalopram vs Risperidone	No	Psychosis Agitation	NPI	78	14	6 week inpt	Significant Improvement from baselineline in both outcomes for both meds
Porteinsson 2014 (n=186)	Citalopram	Yes	Agitation	NBRS-A mADCS-CCGIC	78	15.7	9 weeks	Significant improvement vs placebo in both outcomes
Camargos 2014 (n=36)	Trazodone	Yes	Sleep	NTST	81	11.2	outpt	Significant improvement vs. placebo

Adapted from McClam 2015 Harvard Rev Psych 377-393

# Questions



# Case Presentation



# Case Study for Providence Alaska Project ECHO Dementia



**Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska**

**Presented by Gay Wellman, RN**  
Education Specialist  
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska

# Case Study

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- 84-year-old professional married man with dementia – probably early middle-stage or Emerald Gem stage – increasing confusion
- Began showing signs of cognitive decline about three years ago
- Two years ago, the wife became the trigger; the wife regularly attends a partner support group since November 2020
- Husband can appear fine for others, articulate, educated, pleasant
- Wife reports lots of challenges trying to get help from VA, doctors, lawyers and other service agencies





# Progressive Concerns

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- Sharing sensitive financial information with strangers
- No longer able to understand financial matters
- Not taking needed medications
- Increasing frustration when he can't manage his computer
- Becoming belligerent, throwing things whenever frustrated – now showing these behaviors when others present



# More Concerns

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- Can't plan or execute any plans
- Increasing hoarding and clutter in home
- Leaving things burning on the stove/oven
- Lost his ability to stay safe – refusing to wear mask
- Struggling with finding words.
- Repeating, circular conversations with friends



# Newest Issues

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- Sister and niece threatening to file for guardianship from Florida
- Have told wife to get a divorce
- Told him about the wife's previous effort to obtain guardianship; telling him that the wife is "out to bleed him dry"
- Stormed out of doctor's office when doctor suggested he should get a driving test
- Car accident a week ago



# What's Been Done

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- Wife started guardianship paperwork last summer but dropped it – leery of trying to find a lawyer
- Wife had crisis intervention team (CIT) officer visit the home in January in case she had to call 911
- Wife continues to try to get collaboration of what she's experiencing
- Now has attention of bank manager and doctor
- Considering applying for conservatorship; gave wife names of lawyers
- I filed adult protective services (APS) report and left the report with the doctor





# Thank you!

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