

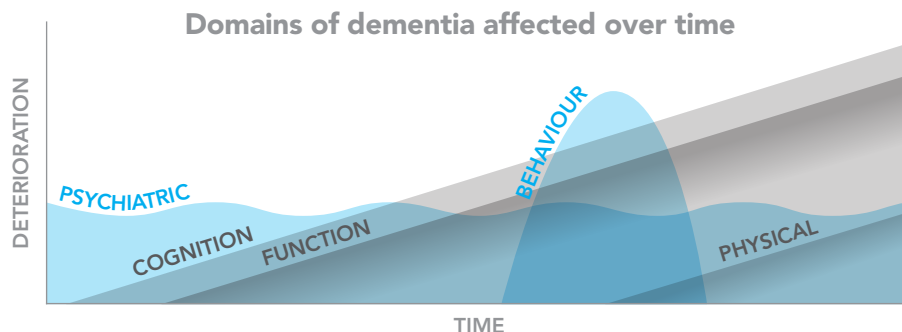
# Management of Dementia

Dementia is increasing in prevalence in Australia as the population is ageing. GP's are well placed to be able to offer comprehensive management plans for their patients that honour their patient's wishes as best they can. Utilising an approach that can match care needs to the various stages of the disease will optimise quality of life for both their patients and their carers.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING AREAS



- What is dementia - The RACGP's Silver book describes dementia as "...a progressive decline in general cognitive function, with normal consciousness and attention.<sup>84</sup> There is impairment of memory, abstract thinking, judgment, verbal fluency and the ability to perform complex tasks. It is associated with behavioural and psychological changes, and impairment of social and physical functioning "
- [www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/silverbook/common-clinical-conditions/dementia/](http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/silverbook/common-clinical-conditions/dementia/)
- Modifying risk factors which may slow progression of dementia
- Developing an approach to management utilising the 5 Domains /3 stages model of progression to optimise patient care.



## PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES



- [www.racgp.org.au/AJGP/2018/September/Office-based-assessment-of-cognitive-impairment](http://www.racgp.org.au/AJGP/2018/September/Office-based-assessment-of-cognitive-impairment)
- [www.racgp.org.au/afp/2014/april/dementia-related-cognitive-decline/](http://www.racgp.org.au/afp/2014/april/dementia-related-cognitive-decline/)
- Review your local HealthPathway on this topic if available  
See [www.healthpathwayscommunity.org/](http://www.healthpathwayscommunity.org/)
- Ask your GP registrar to reflect on a patient that they have been involved in managing dementia and discuss the difficulties they faced. This care can have occurred in a hospital, community or RACF setting

## TEACHING TIPS AND TRAPS



- There is more to dementia than cognitive decline. Remember the Five Domains of Dementia
- Developing a person centered approach to managing dementia. [Read more](#)
- Remember both [pharmacological](#) and [non-pharmacological](#) management strategies
- Support for family/carers. [Read more](#)
- [Advance care planning](#)
- Capacity see <http://capacityaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/NSW-Legal-kit-8pp-sept-2013-version-.pdf>
- [Dementia and driving](#)
- Ask the GP registrar to arrange a Home Medicine Review for a patient with dementia who is on multiple drugs, and then discuss results of this at a later date

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## RESOURCES



### Read

- <https://www.racgp.org.au/afp/2014/april/dementia-related-cognitive-decline/>
- <https://health.dementia.org.au/information/for-health-professionals>
- <https://www.racgp.org.au/afp/2016/december/clinical-practice-guidelines-and-principles-of-care-for-people-with-dementia-in-australia/>
- <https://health.dementia.org.au/information/for-health-professionals/clinical-resources/clinical-tools-and-resources>
- <https://www.dementia.org.au/national/about-dementia/how-is-dementia-treated/drug-treatments-and-dementia>
- <https://health.dementia.org.au/information/for-health-professionals/clinical-resources/pharmacological-treatment>

### Watch

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ0N12dC\\_lo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ0N12dC_lo) - driving and dementia video – Martin Morrissey DTA on approach to management
- GPSA Webinar - [Managing Dementia in General Practice](#) and [Teaching Dementia Care - A Structured Approach](#)

## FOLLOW UP/ EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



1. Ask GP registrar to review Dementia Australia website to find helpful patient resources about dementia for patients and carers <https://www.dementia.org.au/information/about-dementia/what-is-dementia>
2. Robert, 83, is a patient of yours that you diagnosed with alzheimers dementia about 11 months ago. He lives with Judy who is a relatively fit 76 year old and is the main carer for Robert. Robert is still managing most of his personal activities of daily living but struggles with some instrumental activities and is no longer driving. Robert and Judy's daughter, Mary, books in to see you and tells you that she watched a TV show on Dementia last week and wants her Dad to try some medication that was discussed on the show to treat Dementia
  - How would you approach this conversation with Mary?
    - Issues
    - Confidentiality
    - General discussion re role of medication and dementia
    - How you could engage Mary in feeling like she can help her dad without breaking any confidentiality
    - Billing under medicare for consult
  - GP Learning "Identifying people with dementia"  
[https://gplearning.racgp.org.au/User/LMS\\_Resources/4638//shell.html](https://gplearning.racgp.org.au/User/LMS_Resources/4638//shell.html)
  - <http://thinkgp.com.au/search/content/dementia>