

The dilemma of dementia in TBI and I/DD

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A.M.B.E.R. clinic
Albuquerque Multidisciplinary Behavioral Evaluation for Recovery and
Resiliency

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Overview

- **Defining dementia**
- **What determines baseline?**
- **Comorbidities**
- **Are there significant implications**
- **Treatment planning, etc.**

Definition

- **Dementia**
 - **progressive**
 - **loss of mental faculties**
 - **ultimately fatal**
 - **usually slow**

Dementia

- **Secondary to repeated blows to the head**
 - **Dementia pugilistica**
 - **Other forms of brain injury (mechanical)**
 - **? stroke**
- **Premature aging of neurons**
 - **Alzheimer type**
 - **Down Syndrome**
- **Familial predilection**

Baseline?...

- **Whose information provides reliable baseline**
 - **Objective reports**
 - **Family/friend participants**
 - **Offspring; contrast in experiences**
- **Functional abilities**
 - **Range of abilities across settings as compared to current functioning**

Baseline issues, cont.

- **Duration since injury/diagnosis**
 - longer time increases likelihood of degenerative process
- **Secondary illnesses compromising brain function**
 - hypoxemia, encephalopathy
 - medication effects
 - traumatic injuries

Co-morbidities

- **Diagnosable dementias**
 - **Pick, Parkinson, Alzheimer, Lewey-body, Huntington, etc.**
- **Cardiovascular conditions**
 - **Embolic/thrombotic clots; hypo-perfusion; cardiac arrest; infections**
 - **Diabetes**
- **COPD**

Implications

- **Functional limitations**
 - **Safety – mobility, eating, judgment**
 - **Choice-making**
 - **Consent, assent**
 - **Decisional capacity**
- **Supportive care needs**

Treatment

- **Direct at problematic behavior**
 - **Minimize deleterious side effects**
 - **Control anger, violence**
- **Do you use “neuro-protective agents”?**
 - **donazepil, memantine, etc.?**
 - **vit D3, omega-3?**

Treatment planning

- **Financial**
- **Legal**
- **Housing**
 - **when is there need for supervision?**
- **Transportation**
 - **Driving safety**
- **Employment**
 - **I/DD need letters for “early retirement” from mandated activities**

Premature Death

- **Documentation**
 - **Careful notation of supports and rationale for decisions**
 - **Assure informed consent**
- **Consideration of autopsy**
 - **Discuss ahead of time**
 - **Utility of increasing knowledge**
- **Long-term applicability**

Summary

- **Dementia happens – current diagnosis focuses on loss of cognitive function**
- **Poor specificity of treatments for complex behaviors; adjust over time**
- **Consider family system functioning, protection of assets, protection of individual who is increasingly incapacitated**
- **Need more validated data**