

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PATHOCHART

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Alzheimer's disease, sometimes called Alzheimer's Dementia, is a progressive and irreversible neurological disorder that causes loss of memory and cognitive function. Symptoms begin gradually, with signs that are easily attributed to other factors such as misplacing items, forgetting appointments or getting lost in a familiar area. Since Alzheimer's is an irreversible disease, treatment is geared toward management of symptoms and promoting support and the best quality of life possible.

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Difficulty finding words or remembering names
- Poor short-term memory
- Forgetting details of personal history
- Inability to recognize faces
- Difficulty dressing or performing ADLs
- Loss of bladder and bowel control
- Personality changes & inappropriate behaviors
- Wandering or pacing

DIAGNOSTICS

- Symptoms did not present following stroke or other brain injury
- Symptoms cannot be explained by medication or other illness
- Symptoms began gradually (months to years)
- Decline in memory or learning
- Steady cognitive decline without periods of stability
 - Speech
 - Visual-spatial
 - Reasoning or judgement

NURSING PRIORITIES

- Maintain safety and prevent injury
- Assess and monitor cognition

THERAPEUTIC MANAGEMENT

- Reorient as appropriate
- Maintain consistent schedule as able
- Provide structure and guided activities
- Rule out physiological causes of symptoms

MEDICATION THERAPY

- Cholinesterase inhibitors
- NMDA receptor antagonist
- SSRI antidepressants