

Brain and Behaviour in Dementia:

What is Dementia?

Transcript

Male presenter:

In illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease, many parts of the brain are affected. Many parts of the brain are affected significantly- not just the memory centres - we call this illness a dementia. There are many illnesses which cause a dementia. The most common is Alzheimer's disease, and this is thought to be due to the laying down of abnormal proteins in the brain, which causes damage to cells. Other diseases include vascular disease, which is small and large strokes in the brain; Lewy Body disease - which is an illness which is a bit like Parkinson's disease in that it's a neurodegenerative disease - and also fronto-temporal disease, which affects the front part of the brain. There are many other illnesses which also cause dementias but we won't look at these in detail at present but instead look at how these affect the brain and cause the symptoms.

Female presenter:

Although it is important to make allowances for the difficulties of the person you care for, this doesn't mean you can't look for and encourage them to do the things they can still do or even bits of things they used to be able to do, using all the available memory and skills they have.

Carer 1:

If he tries to help me in the kitchen, which he does like to get involved with that sort of thing and I like him to be there because it, you know, he's still interacting and it just encourages him to not be so apathetic ... um, he would, for instance, you know he'd get something off the cooker. If I turn my back, he likes to still do things but he doesn't know the order of doing them. He'll get the saucepan off the cooker and just pour the boiling water into the sieve on to the floor - he just doesn't know - and he'll go to the fridge and unless everything for his, he makes his own sandwiches...he likes to do the same thing at the same, you know, the same order, he likes that part of the routine but if there's something else on the shelf where his sandwich material is, for instance raw bacon, he'll put that in his sandwich. He's not aware of what it really is and he'll just sit and eat it.