

Dementia and Sight Loss

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Content

- Dementia
- Sight Loss and dementia
- What can we do

What is dementia?

- Around 850,000 people with dementia in UK, more than 42,000 under 65
- Not a normal part of ageing
- Symptoms include problems with memory, thinking, concentration and language
- Dementia will get worse over time
- There are different types of dementia

Types of dementia

- Alzheimer's disease
- Vascular dementia
- Mixed dementia
- dementia with Lewy bodies
- Frontotemporal dementia
- Rarer causes – Posterior Cortical Atrophy

Dementia and Sight loss

- 250,000 people living with dementia and sight loss
- Caused by
 - An eye condition
 - Another health condition
 - Normal ageing of the eye
 - dementia

Dementia and Sight loss

- Visual problems but healthy eyes
- Caused by the effect of dementia on the brain
- Specific dementias that may cause this
 - Lewy body dementias
 - Posterior Cortical Atrophy
 - Alzheimer's disease

What to look for?

- Clumsiness
- Not being able to find things
- Problems with eating or drinking
- Avoiding doing things
- Not seeing well even with their glasses on

Living with dementia and sight loss

- Increased difficulties with new tasks
- Increased disorientation
- Difficulties with communication
- Mobility difficulties, increased risk of falls
- More visual mistakes

Living with dementia and sight loss

- Increased social isolation
- A range of losses – independence, activities, coping strategies
- Lack of understanding from others
- More likely to experience anxiety

What can be done?

- Regular eye tests
- Make sure glasses are Current, Clean and Correct
- Good lighting
- Colour contrast
- Adapt the environment

Eye tests

- Can be adapted for people with dementia
- Tell the optician about dementia
- Ask for a longer appointment or a specific time of day
- Go with the person, if appropriate
- Take a list of medications

Communication

- Gain the person's attention
- Explain who you are and what you're doing
- Speak clearly, using simple short sentences
- Time
- Provide information in an accessible way

Aids and technology

- Think about what could help and when
- Test any devices
- Professional input
- Are there things in place already?
- Routine is important

Visual hallucinations

- Occur in dementia and sight loss
- Sight loss can increase hallucinations in dementia
- May be a misperception or misidentification
- More common in certain types of dementia

Thank you

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