

There are over 150 causes of dementia. Only one of them is Alzheimers. Many are treatable, some are even curable but Alzheimers is not at this time. There are drugs that may, in some patients, halt the progression of Alzheimers for a period of time. However, they do not work on everyone and the length of time they do work on the few will vary from patient to patient.

Occasionally a person with dementia can be reasoned with but rarely if they have Alzheimers. Once the synapses in the brain quit communicating with one another the ability to reason can be gone. It is important that a caregiver/nurse/doctor or any person trying to provide aid and comfort to a victim of dementia know what kind of dementia their patient has and how to effectively communicate with the patient in order to help them or care for them.

If a patient has Alzheimers, and many other dementias as well, then constancy of environment is critical to keep their cognitive functioning on an even keel. However if there is a medical emergency, whether the person is in their own home or in a long term care facility, they usually wind up in the hospital. That changes all sense of security for the individual and in the case of Alzheimers it can accelerate dementia.

In some facilities that house dementia patients there is an emergency packet to put in the front of each resident's chart. If there is medical emergency the packet is given to the EMTs and the contents are explained to them. It helps the EMTs evaluate the resident since the dementia prevents the resident, in most cases, from accurately answering any of the questions asked by the EMT. The emergency packet includes: Physician's report, DNR, Care plan, Responsible party information, Current medication list (MAR), Authorization to treat, Authorization to obtain medical information.

If proper care is not taken with dementia patients who are being treated with medicine they can revert to the state they were in before they started the treatment. It takes a few weeks for certain drugs to start working again when they are re-introduced and during that time the patient is often difficult to care for. According to the California Senior Legislature, a volunteer body which proposes legislation regarding senior citizens, Alzheimers patients may try to "go-home" wherever home is in their memory bank. They may become combative due to terror. They may cry and cower from any and all help. They may be so agitated that hospital staff will restrain them. Arguing with them can be futile, trying to reason with them can also provoke agitation. Instead, trying to comfort will sometimes work and learning to "agree" with whatever they feel is often helpful.

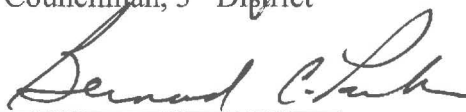
Given the unique needs that dementia patients have, it is important to know what training and preparation our emergency responders have when they are called for service involving dementia persons.


I THEREFORE MOVE that the Fire Department and the Police Department be directed to report on the special needs treatment and procedures which may be currently in place and which may be needed when called for service involving dementia persons.

PRESENTED BY:


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SECONDED BY:




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