



Early Onset Dementias

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- Although early onset dementias are much rarer than dementia in later life, there are 18,500 cases of early onset dementia in the UK.
- The most common cause of dementia in younger people is Alzheimer's disease, with this accounting for approximately one third of all cases.
- One in eight younger patients with dementia have a frontotemporal dementia, making this condition a much more common cause of dementia in younger patients than in older patients.
- One quarter of patients have a rarer cause of their cognitive impairment. It is important to identify treatable causes of dementia and genetic conditions that impact on the family.
- Dementia has profound medical and social effects and this is particularly pronounced in the younger patients.
- Long-term support from a multidisciplinary team is vital to help manage the cognitive, neuropsychiatric and behavioural symptoms that often accompany these disorders. But provision of specialist early onset dementia services is patchy and patients often fall between services.
- Cholinesterase inhibitors, antipsychotic agents, antidepressants, psychological and other non-pharmacological treatment strategies all have a role in the management of early onset dementias. It is also important to consider treatment of any comorbid medical or psychiatric illnesses in addition to the treatment of the underlying degenerative disorder.