

Empowerline Forum Series: Supporting Dementia at Home

September 17, 2020

Audience Questions and Panelist Answers

Audience Questions	Answers
How do you feel about vitamins?	In general, I encourage a good general multivitamin with minerals. I don't get too agitated about people taking one or two "nutraceuticals", but I discourage people from taking too many as there may be unpredictable side effects or drug interactions. All claims that sound too good to be true, are very likely false claims! (Dr. Jim Lah)
Is there any support in Athens? I need help!!	Please call the NE GA ADRC. They can help you find resources in Athens - 706-583-2546 or http://www.negr.org/aging.php . Additionally, www.eldercare.acl.gov can help you find an Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) anywhere in the United States that serves the area you or a loved one lives in. (Cara Pellino)
If an individual has brain aneurysms, does that mean they necessarily have vascular dementia or Alzheimer's?	Aneurysms may be completely benign (e.g., tiny aneurysms that are very unlikely to rupture) and just need to be monitored. If an aneurysm has ruptured, there may be potential damage to the brain related to the hemorrhage. In these cases, those individuals may indeed have a type of vascular dementia. Aneurysms and Alzheimer's disease have no known direct relationship, but I suppose with really bad luck an individual could have problems stemming from both Alzheimer's and from an aneurysm. (Dr. Jim Lah)
What are your thoughts on Hippocampal sclerosis and how it relates to Alzheimer's?	Hippocampal sclerosis is a distinct pathological process in which there is degeneration of the hippocampus, which is an area of the brain that is often sensitive to damage and degeneration in Alzheimer's disease. When we examine brains of older individuals at autopsy, we may see hippocampal sclerosis in isolation and in some cases may see it co-existing with Alzheimer's pathology. (Dr. Jim Lah)
Who is Teepa Snow?	Teepa Snow is one of the leading educators on dementia. She founded Positive Approach to CARE which provides dementia care training, services, and products. See more at www.teepasnow.com (Cara Pellino)
My mom was diagnosed with vascular dementia. However, Alzheimer's was put on her death certificate. When will pathology be more accurate?	Usually one can clearly distinguish between the two at autopsy, and with current tools (MRI and specific Alzheimer's "biomarkers"), a skilled clinician can usually make a pretty accurate assessment of the cause for someone's dementing illness. (Dr. Jim Lah)

<p>How about getting into clinical studies? What are the odds?</p>	<p>There are an increasing number of clinical studies in the area of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. Some of these may be "observational" in which we are seeking to better understand an aspect of the disease and others may be "interventional" in which we are attempting to determine if a potential new treatment is in fact beneficial. The studies that are active at Emory can be found on the Alzheimer's Center website http://alzheimers.emory.edu/ (Dr. Jim Lah)</p>
<p>Can you tell us how to direct caregivers to learn more about the respite funds available? Thank you for all you do to help our community living with dementia!</p>	<p>Empowerline.org or (404) 463-3333 (Cara Pellino)</p>
<p>Is stress the umbrella to all these different diseases or associated with it?</p>	<p>Stress certainly appears to be contributor to many diseases. Even if it is not the primary cause, high levels of stress may have many detrimental effects that can aggravate and worsen many conditions including brain diseases. (Dr. Jim Lah)</p>
<p>Where is the best place to get an accurate diagnosis? We took mom to a neurologist, but he did no real tests and wanted to put her on a drug.</p>	<p>Some neurologists do a better job than others in dealing with these conditions. We have a specialty clinic in the Cognitive Neurology Program at Emory and we are working to establish similar expert centers around the state through the Georgia Memory Net (https://gamemorynet.org/). (Dr. Jim Lah)</p>
<p>Can I ask a general practitioner for a diagnosis or do I need to find a specialist?</p>	<p>This will vary by the individual provider and some general practitioners may be very good. In general, a specialist such as a neurologist would be likely to be more knowledgeable and comfortable making a diagnosis. (Dr. Jim Lah)</p>
<p>How do you persuade your loved one to get tested when they don't think they have memory problems at all?</p>	<p>This can be very tricky! It is helpful to know that a memory screen is part of the Annual Medicare Wellness visit if they are eligible. Knowing that everyone gets this test as we get older to establish a baseline of our brain health is helpful. It is also really helpful to know that there are some conditions that cause symptoms of dementia that can be "fixed" or reversed. Examples include issues with thyroid or B12; perhaps different doctors have prescribed medications that are interacting or the medications are not being taken correctly; a urinary tract infection can cause very unusual "behaviors" that can look like dementia. Sometimes it helps to talk about how you are going to get a memory screen and you think it would be great if you both do it; invite them to join you in taking care of your brain health. (Kim McRae)</p>
<p>Is there a specific factor or issue for the increased rate for GA?</p>	<p>It is mainly related to the age of the population, but there are other factors including race and ethnicity as African Americans</p>

<p>What makes Georgia so prone to have so many cases? Why do GA and SC have such a high rate of Alzheimer's?</p>	<p>and Hispanics are at higher risk of developing Alzheimer's and related dementing illnesses. (Dr. Jim Lah)</p>
<p>I guess it is common for patients to decline, bounce back? Cycles of Disease.</p>	<p>There can be some of this when a person experiences an acute illness on top of their dementing illness. During the acute illness, memory problems and confusion may worsen but bounce back and at least partly recover after their illness. In terms of the underlying degenerative disease (such as Alzheimer's disease), an individual may have good days and bad days just like anyone else, but overall the course is one of steady decline over time. (Dr. Jim Lah)</p>
<p>what can I do to bring some purpose to my mother's life? she is mid stage dementia.</p>	<p>It is really helpful to really know her life story and what has been really important to her throughout her life. What has she really enjoyed doing? What kinds of things have brought her joy? How has she volunteered or helped others? So often, people who are living with dementia want to continue contributing and helping others! Asking them if they could help you with things is a great start. If she always loved baking for others, for example, but can't make cookies all by herself - think about how to break things down into steps so that she CAN do what she is able to do. Always try to focus on their abilities - what are they able to still do? Don't just focus on what they are no longer able to do by themselves. Think about how you can enable them to continue contributing and finding ways to find joy! (Kim McRae)</p> <p>Every journey with dementia is unique. Focus on what she can still do, what she still understands, what gives her feelings of purpose and create those situations and scenarios in even small ways. My mother was always a caregiver of others. I was able to appeal to that by asking for her help and needing her. The caregivers pretended to need a place a stay and she would try to take care of them. (Bonnie Roache)</p>
<p>How can we get family caregiver training?</p>	<p>There are a number of programs that provide support and caregiver training. This includes programs developed in the Emory Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (http://alzheimers.emory.edu/) and there are programs being developed through the Emory Roybal Center (https://www.emorycaregiving.org/). The Alzheimer's Association also has some support and training programs (https://www.alz.org/georgia)</p> <p>Emory Integrated Memory Care Center sent out email blast about many trainings. Some were half or full day trainings for professional caregivers but included families. (Multiple sources)</p>

<p>How does a caregiver find decent in-home caregiving for memory care when there is not enough income to afford it and pay for living expenses? My numerous searches for help have not been productive. The caregiver must work or there will be no income and the patient is alone and wanders outside the house and unable to communicate. The caregiver is not member of a church or other social service organization and working from home is not an option.</p>	<p>Please call Empowerline's ADRC to speak with a Counselor who can discuss options with you. (404) 463-3333 (Cara Pellino)</p>
<p>Does doing puzzles, brain games help in delaying Dementia?</p>	<p>It is always a good idea to keep your brain active and challenged. If you enjoy doing puzzles and playing games, keep enjoying them. My preference is always for people to engage in activities that provide both mental and social stimulation and engagement in pursuit of something that is meaningful to you (e.g., volunteer organizations, faith-based activities, etc.). (Dr. Jim Lah)</p>
<p>Thank you so much for offering this webinar. Is Dr. Lah going to focus on Alzheimer's when discussing dementia? My husband has LBD which is a form of dementia but very different.</p>	<p>Have you reached out to the Lewy Body Dementia Association? Lbda.org They have great info and resources. (Cara Pellino)</p>
<p>What type of financial resources pay for testing? Most people who I work with cannot afford preventive services.</p>	<p>Check with your local health system to see if there's a charity care system in place that covers these services. There may also be opportunities for cognitive screenings at senior health fairs. The Alzheimer's Foundation of America has been offering free virtual cognitive screenings. These screenings are not the same thing as a neurologist's exam, but may give families an idea of the problem (Laura Medders, LCSW/Integrated Memory Clinic - Emory)</p>
<p>How long does it take ARC/Senior Services to approve you for services? I have been on the waiting list since June 2019</p>	<p>It depends on a number of factors including funding availability, wait lists, level of impairment. You can call Empowerline's ADRC to get an update (404) 463-3333. (Cara Pellino)</p>