



Memory Issues and Forgetfulness

Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf

March 25, 2010

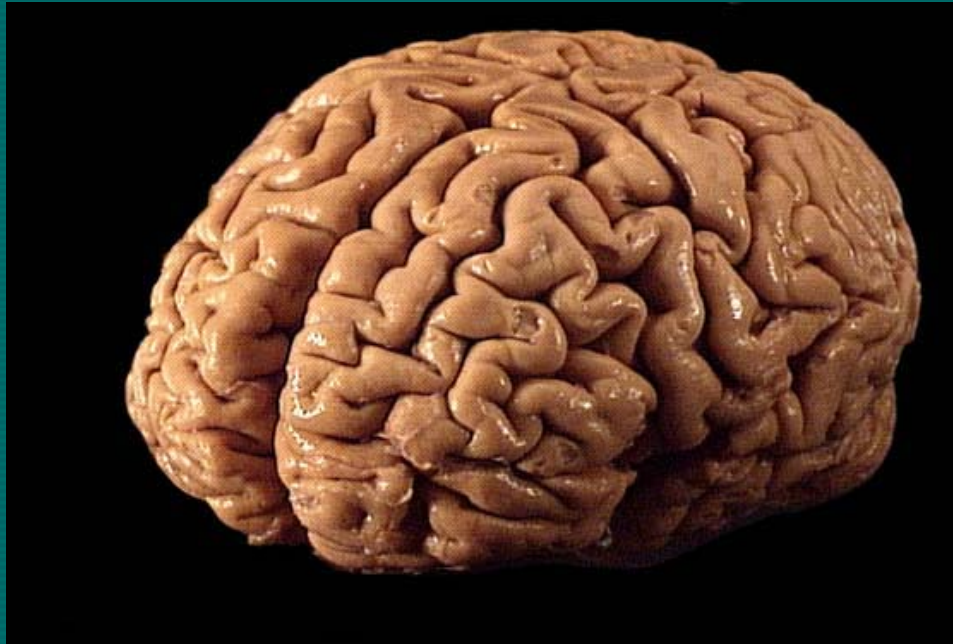
Supporters

- Deaf Health Community Committee Members
 - Cathie Armstrong
 - Mistie Cramer
 - Michael McKee
 - Matt Starr
 - Patrick Sullivan
- University of Rochester's Center for Community Health
- Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf (“REAP”)

Overview

- What is the brain and the higher functions?
- What is considered normal forgetfulness?
- What is dementia?
- Symptoms and signs of dementia and delirium
- Prevention
- Treatments

The Brain



How many neurons are in a brain?
33 billion!

The Brain

- Brain is the center of your nervous system
- Most complex biological structure in body
- Controls all actions of the body

Brain's Higher Functions

- Memory/Learning
- Language and Math
- Emotional Response
- Social Interaction
- Executive Planning
- Creative Visualization

Memory Loss

- Everyone has experience with memory issues!
 - Examples:
 - Forget someone's name?
 - Forget to buy a food item at the store?
 - Forget a videophone number?
 - Forget an anniversary or birthday?
 - Forget where you left your car at the parking lot?
 - Forget where you left your keys?
 - Forget to take your medications?
 - Forget your doctor's appointment?

Memory Loss

- Some forgetfulness or memory loss is normal
- If memory loss is persistent and occurs frequently, it is important to check for other causes of memory losses

“Normal” Memory Loss Causes

- Emotions- upset, depressed, anxious
- Fatigue- feeling tired
- Sick with an infection- “common cold”
- Poor nutrition or hungry

What are signs of dementia?

- Memory loss
- Difficulty communicating
- Cannot learn or remember new information
- Disorganized
- Difficulty with coordination and motor functions
- Personality changes
- Inappropriate behavior
- Paranoia
- Agitation or upset easily



Dementia

- Dementia is not just memory loss
 - 2 or more brain functions are affected
- Are all cases of dementia permanent?
 - No. Some may be corrected.

Risk Factors for Dementia

- Age
- Family history
- Low levels of education
- African-Americans and Hispanics
- Heavy alcohol use
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Smoking

* Those who know more than one language have lower rates of dementia

Common Types of Dementia

- Alzheimer's- most common (60-80%)
 - 1 in 8 people 65 years or older have this
 - 1 in 2 people 85 years or older have this
 - Irreversible and progressive
 - Slow and steady decline

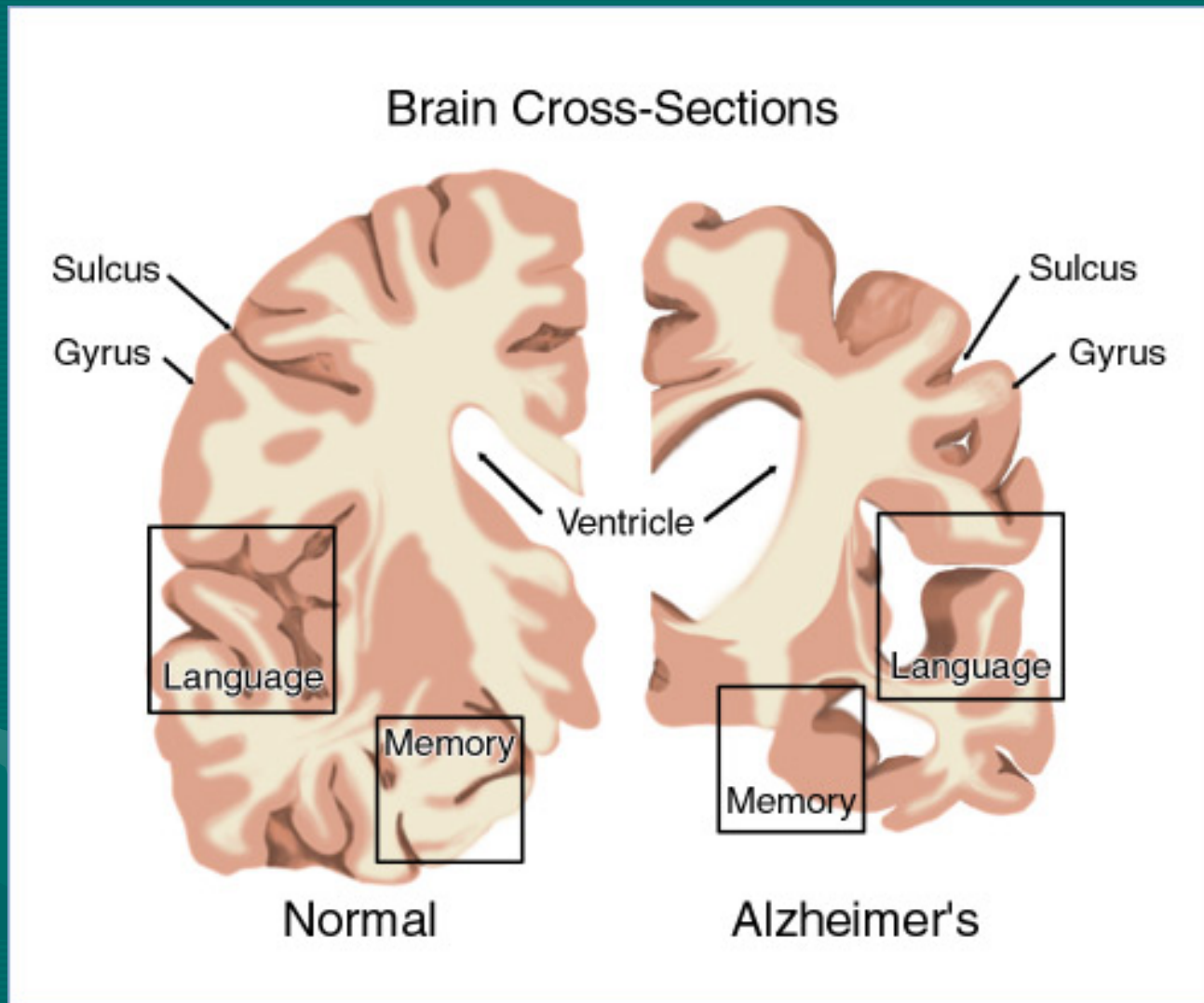
Common Types of Dementia

- Vascular Dementia- second most common
 - Usually caused by decreased blood flow to the brain
 - Can be from small strokes or blockages in the arteries
 - Irreversible and progressive
 - Decline varies

Reversible Dementia

- About 10% of dementia are reversible
 - Infections (meningitis or encephalitis)
 - Thyroid issues
 - Nutrition issues (not enough Vitamin B12)
 - Medication side effects
 - Poison from heavy metals (e.g. lead)
 - Drugs or alcohol (for some)

Dementia vs Normal



Common Testing

- Memory and Cognition Tests (checks your brain function)
- Vitamin B12 (checks for levels)
- TSH (checks for thyroid)
- Complete blood count (checks for anemia)
- RPR (checks for syphilis)
- CT/MRI scan of brain (looks at brain structure)
- Glucose (checks for diabetes)

Preventive Strategies

- Exercise your mind!
 - Can increase your brain power and efficiency
- Exercise your body!
 - Improves blood flow to your brain
- Healthy diet
 - Fish (omega 3 fatty acids)
 - Vegetables and fruits
 - Whole grains
 - Plenty of water

Preventive Strategies

- Get enough sleep
- Relaxation- can be done through art work or exercise
- Get organized!
 - Remove clutter and develop a system of where things go

Memory Aids

- Use technology reminders
 - Pager reminders for medications or appointments
- Use small notes to remind you
- When learning a new name or word, think what is different or unique
- Practice!!!

Dementia Strategies

- Prepare for long term care
 - Families and friends
 - Health care staff and nursing care
 - Living situation- nursing home versus other
 - Living Will and health care proxy
 - Health care insurance

Medications

- Aricept (donepezil)
- Exelon (rivastigmine)
- Razadyne (galantamine hydrobromide)
- Namenda (memantine)

- These medications do not reverse dementia
- These medications help slow down your decline
- Side effects are common!
 - Nausea
 - Dizziness
 - Diarrhea

Caregiver Support

- Taking care of a person with dementia is hard work!
- Caregiver can get tired or frustrated
- Support groups
- Day programs or respite programs
- Join Alzheimer's Association for support programs (<http://www.alz.org/rochesterny/>)
- Don't be afraid to ask others for help

Questions?

- Thank you for coming!
- Next Deaf Health Talk will be on Thursday, April 15 at 7 pm!
- Location: Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf

Topics for Next Month

- Audience vote
 - Please provide topics that you would like to have for next month in April