



Alzheimer's Disease (and other Dementias)

Important Note on Dementia:

Dementia is a term typically used to describe a group of symptoms which include memory loss, difficulty problem-solving or thinking clearly and problems with language. As we have discussed in previous activities there are multiple diseases which result in dementia, the most common of which is Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's Disease (AD)

AD is the most common type of neurodegeneration, with an estimated 850,000 people in the UK currently suffering from the disease.

The disease is progressive and begins with a condition known as 'mild-cognitive impairment' in which a person may forget a recent conversation or the name of a particular object. AD becomes gradually more severe over a number of years, with symptoms such as visuo-spatial problems (difficulties judging distance) and disorientation becoming more common. In late stages, mood changes can be seen and people may become uncharacteristically aggressive or begin to have delusions or hallucinations. The disease worsens until a person is no longer aware of what is going on around them and is unable to take care of themselves or remember close friends or relatives.

Task 1: Watch the video 'What is dementia?' and explore the other resources at [alzheimers.org.uk](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk) to learn more about the disease

https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20007/types_of_dementia/1/what_is_dementia

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD)

FTD is one of the least common types of dementia and, as the name suggests, is associated with damage to the frontal and temporal lobes. As we saw in activity 1, the frontal and temporal lobes are associated with personality and behaviour, as well as language. Therefore symptoms of FTD are often associated with mood changes and difficulties with language, rather than the typical memory loss seen in other dementias.

As we discussed in activity 2, genetic cases of neurodegenerative diseases are usually rare. However, about one in every three people with FTD will have a family history of the condition.

Task 2: explore more about FTD using the link below

https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20007/types_of_dementia/11/frontotemporal_dementia



Vascular Dementia

This is the second most common type of dementia and there are currently around 150,000 sufferers within the UK. There are multiple sub-types of vascular dementia and their cause is slightly different to other neurodegenerative diseases you have come across so far.

The death of neurons in vascular dementia, as the name suggests, results from a lack of blood supply to the brain. Neurons usually rely on a healthy blood supply for delivery of nutrients and other essential factors – when this is compromised they will degenerate and eventually die.

The cause of the lack of blood supply is the reason for the many sub-types, with stroke-related dementia and post-stroke dementia resulting from injury during a stroke, whereas subcortical dementia is a result of disease of the very small blood vessels deep inside the brain.

Task 3: Watch the video 'What is vascular dementia?' at the link below

https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20007/types_of_dementia/5/vascular_dementia