



Medicare Experts/Senior Access
Innovations in Geriatric Practice and Alzheimer's Care

Alzheimer's and Other Dementias: Facing Realities
How to deliver the diagnosis and craft the treatment plan

Webinar Presentation, March 2, 2012

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- Handouts for this webinar available at www.ColoradoMESA.org
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Intro to The Colorado M.E.S.A Initiative

- The Colorado M.E.S.A. Initiative
 - Medicare Experts / Senior Access
 - Be adept at Medicare coding & documentation so you are paid fairly for work
 - Be comfortable serving patients with dementia & other geriatric syndromes
- A collaboration:
 - Funded by The Colorado Health Foundation, The Kaiser Permanente Foundation, and Caring for Colorado
 - Alzheimer's Association, Colorado Chapter
 - Senior Care of Colorado/IPC

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Donald Murphy, MD

- MESA founder and faculty member
- Graduate of Notre Dame and the University of Colorado School of Medicine
- Geriatric fellowship at Harvard Medical School
- Started Senior Care of Colorado practice in 2001 and now Practice Group Leader
 - Grown to almost 70 providers
 - 7 outpatient clinics
 - Virtually 100% Medicare



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Amelia Schafer

- Director of Professional Education for Alzheimer's Association Colorado Chapter
- Worked with the Alzheimer's Association (CO and OR) for past 12 years
- Coordinates the training institute for healthcare professionals
- Works with medical students, residents, and physicians



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Realities

- Today, there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease
- An undue burden is frequently placed on the caregivers of Alzheimer's patients
- Patients and caregivers deserve to know the truth and need support
- There are not definitive, black-and-white answers or clear-cut solutions
- *However*, it is possible to live a quality life within the confines of a difficult situation

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Delivering the Diagnosis

Diagnosing Memory Loss

- Detailed webinar on this topic on MESA website archives
- Picking up today where that webinar left off

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Diagnosing Memory Loss

- Barriers
 - Takes too much time
 - Don't want to be the "bad guy" and have to break the news
- Reality
 - Can be very *quick and simple* to "get in the ballpark" and know enough (see the previous webinar)
 - Medicare provides reimbursement for "counseling & coordination of care" (know how to bill for it)
 - In the end, there is no way around it
- The real *key* to diagnosis is history from family or significant others

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Diagnosis: Delivering the News

- Some clinicians out of their comfort zone
 - May have to face your own fears and challenge beliefs
 - An opportunity to grow as a clinician
- Families *need* a diagnosis
 - It helps to have a name for what's going on
 - Some are relieved and some dread it, but they all deserve to know the truth

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Diagnosis: Delivering the News

- Bedside manner is tantamount
 - Oftentimes, the physician is the only link of hope for the family
 - Some patients: *"I wish they hadn't told us anything"*
 - Have a "script" and know how to frankly, thoroughly and compassionately deliver the message

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Diagnosis: Education

- Information is powerful and can make people feel better
- Give as much as is feasible, including:
 - Cause
 - Expected course
 - Treatment options
- Immediately guide families to resources
 - Call Alzheimer's Association local office or 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900

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Treatment Plans

What Next? Treatment Plans

- Most important thing is that the problem has been identified and acknowledged
- Be proactive in keeping the patient safe and functional
 - Develop a schedule or routine
 - Anticipate the biggest safety issues and have a plan (e.g., wandering, driving, medications)
- Schedule periodic follow-up visits as needed with the patient and family to discuss and educate
- Tailor treatment plan to meet the patient's individual needs/circumstances

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Medications

Same medications regardless of dementia type:

- Cholinesterase inhibitors (*generally use one of three*)
 1. Exelon
 2. Razadyne
 3. Aricept
- Namenda (*in addition*)

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Medications

- Measure effectiveness by reports from patient/family
- Watch for:
 - Functional improvement
 - More interest in activities
 - Greater lucidity in conversation
 - Increased recognition

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Medications

- Placebo effect could kick in right away
- At about 4 months after initiation:
 - If no improvement, consider changing medication
- After trial of 2 or more medications:
 - Discuss pros and cons of continuing medications
 - Realize that medications may be slowing the progression
- Be sensitive to cost of medications
 - New classes in the pipeline likely to increase cost

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Complimentary Therapies

- Consider non-medical additions to treatment plan
- Lifestyle modifications (diet, exercise)
- Many research-based approaches do not involve pharmaceuticals, e.g.:
 - Music Therapy*
 - Art Therapy*
 - Imagination*
 - Therapeutic Touch*

* View videos via MESA website

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Advanced Dementia

- Reassess medications in advanced stages
 - Especially in the LTC setting
 - It's fine to continue medications appropriately
 - Be wary of claim 'patient will decline rapidly after withdrawal from medication'

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Advanced Dementia

- Hospice care
 - Consider for advanced dementia and clear decline
 - Turn to hospice support early enough
 - They are experts in pain management
 - Many families avoid the topic of Hospice, but are thankful when they are involved
 - Introduce with discussion about palliative care

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Advanced Dementia: Pain

- Pain Management becomes a considerable issue
- In LTC setting physician must get involved
- Health professionals in hospital, nursing home, and ALF settings aren't consistently trained in pain assessment
- If PRN pain meds are ordered, the patient may not be able to ask for it and considerable pain may go untreated

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Advanced Dementia: Pain

- Use behavioral pain assessment methods
- Avoid 0-10 scale and face scale
- Watch for moans, groans, cries, gasps, furrowed brow, narrowed eyes, tightened lips, dropped jaw, clenched teeth, clutching or holding, rubbing affected area, restlessness, resistance or combativeness with care
- People will often say "no" to the question, "Are you in pain?"
- Alzheimer's Association pain assessment tool and training available

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alzheimer's  association

alzheimer's association

**Alzheimer's Association
Colorado Chapter**

**24 Hr Helpline
1-800-272-3900**

www.alz.org/co



How We Can Help Your Patients



- Take the ancillary issues out of the medical appointment setting
- Tackle issues, one at a time
- Programs are FREE, so cost is never a barrier to access services



Rapid Referrals



- Immediately connect your patients to us through the Rapid Referral Form
- Simply fill out and fax it back
- Forms are inside folders and on www.ColoradoMESA.org website, by region



We're Here to Help Your Practice

- Access for patients to the FREE 24-Hour Helpline
1-800-272-3900
- Education classes addressing needs through all stages of the disease
- Individual or family counseling with a Master's level Care Consultant
- Monthly help in over 90 Support Groups statewide
- Enrollment for families in the MedicAlert+SafeReturn Program for wandering

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Dementia & Driving Resource Center

Help your patients deal with this difficult issue early by referring them to the Alzheimer's Association interactive website featuring

- A video illustrating a family having a supportive conversation about driving
- A link to Driving Evaluation Specialists
- A Driving Safety Guide

http://www.alz.org/safetycenter/we_can_help_safety_driving.asp

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Additional Resources for Your Practice

- Alzheimer's Association TrialMatch (www.alz.org/trialmatch) Easy link to vetted national drug trials and other Alzheimer's research projects
- *Health, Outcomes, Planning & Education (HOPE) for Alzheimer's Act*—facilitate care planning and ensure documentation of a dementia diagnosis in medical records
- International Society to Advance Alzheimer Research & Treatment (ISTAART) - membership organization for healthcare professionals

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Alzheimer's Association Colorado Chapter



24/7 Helpline
800-272-3900

www.alz.org/co

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Q&A, Wrap-Up

Q&A

- If you would like to ask any questions, please type them into the "Questions" box in your Go-to-Webinar control panel now



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MESA Website

- Reminder to use resources on www.ColoradoMESA.org
- Sign in to access
- Webinar archives and handouts
- Videos
- Documents and links
- Discussion forum
 - Ask any questions that weren't answered today

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Next Webinar

- Friday, April 6
- 12:15 pm
- Making Sense of PQRS (Physician Quality Reporting System)
- Check the MESA website or sign up for our eNewsletters

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