ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
Established 1977 • Licensed 1990

Senile Degeneration of the Brain

Senile degeneration of the brain encompasses a range of neurological disorders characterized by a progressive decline in cognitive function, impacting memory, reasoning, and the ability to perform everyday activities. The condition is often age-related and can severely impair the individual's quality of life.

Common Symptoms:

Symptoms may differ from person to person

- Memory loss, particularly recent memories
- Difficulty with problem-solving and planning
- Confusion about time and place
- Language problems (difficulty finding words, following conversations)
- Changes in mood or behavior, including depression or anxiety
- Difficulty with tasks that require planning or organization

Causes:

Potential causes:

- Age-related brain cell degeneration, genetics, and environmental factors.

Hospice Considerations:

While Senile Degeneration of the Brain cannot be cured, depending on the stage of disease, some medications may be considered to help slow cognitive decline. Hospice goals of care aim to provide comfort and dignity with symptom management.

- **Advanced Symptoms:** This stage occurs when the patient is unable to recognize family members, cannot perform daily activities independently, and shows significant weight loss and swallowing difficulties.
- **Symptom Management:** Difficulty managing symptoms such as severe agitation, profound confusion, and difficulty swallowing becomes prevalent. The patient may require assistance with feeding and hygiene.

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- **End-of-Life Care:** When the patient and family decide to prioritize comfort over aggressive treatments, hospice focuses on pain relief, hydration, and emotional support, helping families navigate the end-of-life process

Symptom Management Tips:

- **Establish Routines:** Stick to a predictable daily schedule to minimize confusion and enhance a sense of security.
- **Participate in Activities:** Engage in simple, enjoyable activities (i.e. looking at photo albums or gardening) to promote positive emotions.

How to Help:

- **Patient Tips:**
  - **Establish Routines:** Stick to a predictable daily schedule to minimize confusion and enhance a sense of security.
  - **Participate in Activities:** Engage in simple, enjoyable activities (i.e. looking at photo albums or gardening) to promote positive emotions.
  - **Communicate Needs:** Use simple words or gestures to express needs; non-verbal communication can be effective.

- **Caregiver Tips:**
  - **Provide Reassurance:** Offer comfort and reassurance, especially during moments of confusion or fear.
  - **Monitor for Changes:** Keep an eye on physical and emotional changes and report them to the healthcare team for timely interventions.
  - **Encourage Independence:** Allow the patient to perform self-care tasks as much as possible to maintain dignity.

St. Francis Reflections is always available to assist with any questions or concerns 24/7

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