

ELDERLY MEDICINE

DEMENTIA

	Alzheimer's	Vascular	Lewy Body
Pathophysiology	<p>Protein misfolding leads to accumulation of amyloid protein plaques & (tau) neurofibrillary tangles</p> <p>These are thought to trigger neuronal degeneration</p> <p>Mainly in cortex</p> <p>Causes gross atrophy</p>	<p>Also known as multi infarct dementia</p> <p>Multiple, often subclinical, infarcts of small blood vessels in multiple areas of the brain. Infarcts can be ischaemic or haemorrhagic</p> <p>Risk factors are as for cerebro/ cardiovascular disease</p> <p>May coexist with other forms of dementia</p>	<p>Abnormal collections of alpha- synuclein protein develop in neuronal cytoplasm</p> <p>Mainly in cortex</p> <p>These are known as Lewy bodies and are also seen in Parkinson's disease (in substantia nigra). As such the two are often described as being on the same disease spectrum</p>
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insidious onset • Memory impairment is an early feature • Later become confused and upset in novel situations • Disorientated to time & place • Require help of care givers • 'Sundowning' where patient becomes more confused after dark • Sleep disturbance • In final stages the person is completely dependent • Speech is lost • Apathetic • Reduced appetite & mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often stepwise onset • Cognitive function may improve slightly between downward steps • Symptoms are variable depending on areas of brain affected • Mood disorders • Apathy • Impaired executive functioning • Speech impairment may develop • Memory impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be acute in onset • Symptoms often fluctuate • Initial features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impaired attention ○ Executive functions e.g. problem solving, planning ○ Visuospatial problems e.g. misjudging distances, becoming lost • Visual hallucinations • Impaired impulse control • Some Parkinson's like movement issues But tremors less likely • Memory impairment is usually a later feature • Hypersensitive to anticholinergics or antidopaminergics e.g. antipsychotics These can produce catatonia or life threatening muscle rigidity