

## Appendix 3

### When it's Not Alzheimer's

As stated earlier there are many diseases that can cause the condition of dementia. Alzheimer's is the most common, but there are several other diseases that can cause dementia that have different symptoms and may bring different challenges to a senior housing community. Below are some of the more common related disorders and highlight the symptoms that may be characteristic of that disease and the uniqueness of the challenges to the elder housing/independent living community.

#### **Lewy Body Disease**

- Visual hallucinations
- Significant change in judgment and lesser change in memory in the earlier stages
- Dramatically good periods for a few days or even weeks, followed by a dramatic worsening in thinking and behaving
- Symptoms that look like Parkinson's disease, tremors, muscle stiffness and rigidity, facial tics, motor coordination problems, changes in walking, frequent falls and problems with balance.
- Disturbed sleeping patterns and vivid dreams and falls out of bed
- Sensitivity to many medications, especially antipsychotic medications
- Disinhibited behavior

#### **Vascular Dementia**

- Short term memory is impaired but generally better than with Alzheimer's
- Experiences delusions (thinks things are true that are, in fact, not true)
- Perseverative behavior (repeats things over and over)
- Change in personality and quick changes in mood
- Progresses in phases where there are plateaus for periods of time, and then, sudden declines in cognitive and functional capacity, referred to as a step wise decline.
- Has difficulty conforming to accepted social behavior (may lose self-control, moral judgment and social propriety)
- Often has medical conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease
- Difficult to redirect their behavior
- Agitated easily, emotional outbursts, potential for aggressive behavior

#### **Frontotemporal Degeneration**

- Behavioral form mirrors vascular dementia where there is a profound loss in self-control, impaired social constraint.
- Linguistic forms or Primary Progressive Aphasia where there is loss of producing language or understanding language or, significant slowness of speech and cognitive loss
- Motor forms that lead to paralysis, blindness, muteness and cognitive loss

#### **Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus**

- Urinary Incontinence
- Falls
- Confusion, disorientation and cognitive dysfunction
- Visual and spatial disorientation

#### **Alcohol Related Dementia**

- Problems with judgment and reasoning, cognitively impaired, but not as profoundly as with Alzheimer's
- May experience hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, agitation, disinhibited behavior
- Perseverative
- Medically compromised

## **Reversible or Treatable Conditions That Can Look Like Alzheimer's Disease**

There are number of medical conditions that may cause changes in behavior or thinking that resemble Alzheimer's disease, but may have a chance of reversing symptoms or, at least, halting the progression of symptoms.

To name a few:

- Vitamin/mineral deficiencies like, B12, B6, potassium, iron, copper
- Infections, like urinary tract infections, pneumonia
- Depression
- Anemia
- Sleep Deprivation, Sleep Apnea
- Diabetes, Cardiovascular disease
- Social Isolation
- Dehydration
- Drug Interactions
- And more