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SPECIAL REPORT HEALTH SERIES

What Is Dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe the loss of cognitive or intellectual function. Many conditions can cause dementia.

Dementia related to depression, drug interaction, and thyroid and other problems may be reversible if detected early. That is one of the reasons it's important to obtain a professional assessment, so that the actual cause can be identified and proper care provided.

Several other diseases can also cause dementia, such as Parkinson's, Creutzfeldt-Jakob, Huntington's, and multi-infarct of vascular disease, caused by multiple strokes in the brain.

Dementia, a progressive brain dysfunction, leads to a gradually increasing restriction of daily activities. The most well-known type of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. Dementia not only affects patients, but also those surrounding them, as most patients require care in the long-term.

It is a myth that aging and psychiatric problems go hand in hand and it is also a myth that it is not worth conducting accurate diagnostics, because 'nothing can be done about it anyway' - some diagnoses are wrong, some diseases are treatable. If the situation is not satisfactory, relatives should seek expert consultation such as from an Alzheimer advice center, find out addresses of experts and obtain get information about legal/financial support, etc.