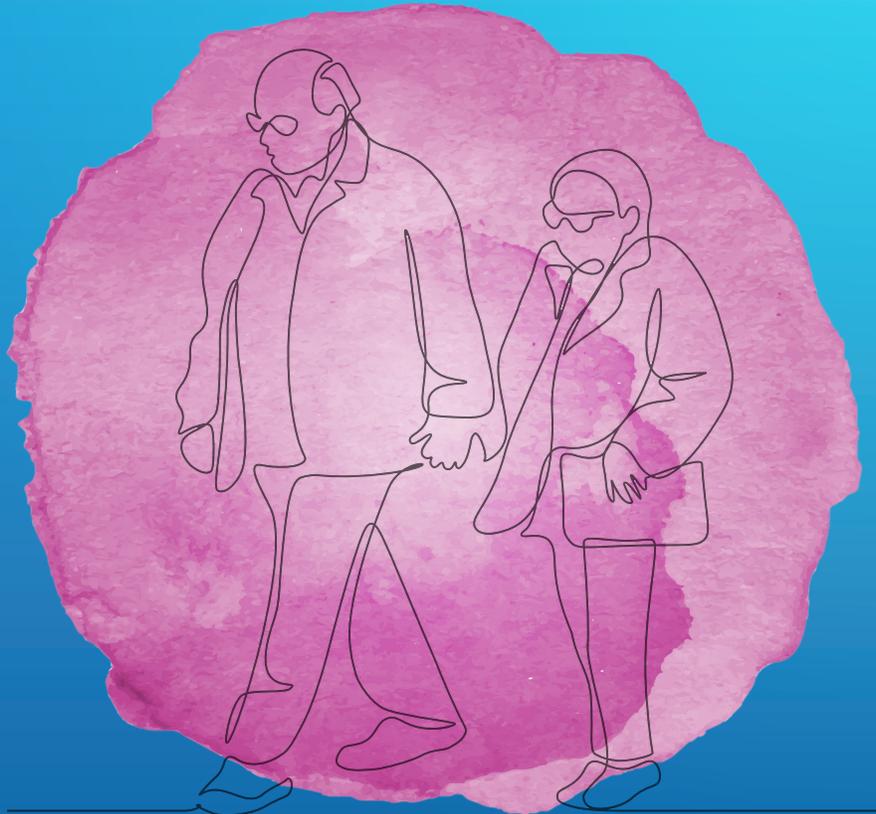


Lewy Body Dementia

Find reason in the confusion. Find help when it's needed.



Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) is a complex and challenging brain disorder because it affects many parts of the brain in ways that scientists are trying to understand more fully. It is challenging because its many possible symptoms make it hard to do everyday tasks that once came easily. Although less known than Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease, LBD is not a rare disorder. More than 1 million Americans, most of them older adults, are affected by its disabling changes in the ability to think and move.

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Understanding. Answers.

Lewy Body Dementia



Understanding the Basics

LBD is a disease associated with abnormal deposits of a protein called alpha-synuclein in the brain. These deposits, called Lewy bodies, affect chemicals in the brain whose changes, in turn, can lead to problems with thinking, movement, behavior and mood. LBD is one of the most common causes of dementia.

Dementia is a severe loss of thinking abilities that interferes with a person's ability to perform daily activities such as household tasks, personal care and handling finances. Dementia has many possible causes, including stroke, brain tumor, depression and vitamin deficiency, as well as disorders such as LBD, Alzheimer's, frontotemporal dementia and vascular dementia.

Diagnosing

Diagnosing LBD can be challenging. Early LBD symptoms are often confused with similar symptoms found in other brain diseases like Alzheimer's or in psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia. Also, LBD can occur alone or along with other brain disorders.

There are two LBD diagnoses—dementia with Lewy bodies and Parkinson's disease dementia. The earliest signs differ but reflect the same biological changes in the brain. Over time, people with dementia with Lewy bodies or Parkinson's disease dementia may develop similar symptoms.

Symptoms

LBD is a progressive disease, meaning symptoms start slowly and worsen over time. The disease lasts an average of 5 to 8 years from the time of diagnosis to death, but the time span can range from 2 to 20 years. How quickly symptoms develop and change varies greatly from person to person, depending on overall health, age and severity of symptoms.

In the early stages of LBD, symptoms can be mild and people can function fairly normally. As the disease advances, people with LBD require more help due to a decline in thinking and movement abilities. In the later stages of the disease, they often depend entirely on others for assistance and care.

Symptoms that distinguish this form of dementia from others may include:

- Visual hallucinations early in the course of dementia.
- Fluctuations in cognitive ability, attention and alertness.
- Slowness of movement, tremor, difficulty walking or rigidity (parkinsonism).
- REM sleep behavior disorder, in which people physically act out their dreams by yelling, flailing, punching bed partners and falling out of bed.
- More trouble with mental activities such as multitasking and problem solving than with memory early in the course of the disease.

Information courtesy of the Lewy Body Dementia Association

Guidance

Luanne Harms, LCSW Therapist

Luanne Harms is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with an academic concentration in Mental Health, Alzheimer's Disease, Lewy Body and Parkinson's Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia, Chronic Encephalopathy (CTE), as well as alcohol- and drug-related dementias.

Professionally, Luanne has served individuals in the midst of the aging process and other phases of life as well their families and caregivers, guiding them and helping them to care for loved ones with Alzheimer's Disease and other related dementias, as well as other chronic health conditions, at home, in the hospital, in long-term care, memory care and hospice.

Certifications in Dementia Care:

- Teepa Snow Positive Approach to Care Master Trainer
- Teepa Snow Engagement Leader
- Dementia Caregiver Specialist
- Texas Oasis Dementia Trainer
- Dementia Advanced Care, HealthCare Interactive

Call 903.330.9592 and make an appointment today.

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