Frontotemporal dementia is the name given to a group of progressive dementias that primarily affect an individual's personality, behavior, and speech. Diseases in this group include the following:

- Pick's Disease
- Frontotemporal Lobar Degeneration
- Progressive Aphasia (problems speaking)
- Semantic Dementia (problems understanding language)
- Corticobasal Degeneration (includes decreased movement)

How Frontotemporal Dementia Differs From Other Forms of Dementia

Unlike most other forms of dementia, memory is not affected in people with frontotemporal dementia (FTD) until later in the disease. FTD mainly affects different parts of the brain than are affected by other forms of dementia: the frontal and temporal lobes. Also, this form of dementia strikes people at a relatively younger age -- usually between the ages of 40 and 60. However, FTD can affect individuals both younger and older than this range.

How Common Is Frontotemporal Dementia?

Among relatively younger adults, FTD is the 2nd most common dementia after early-onset Alzheimer's disease. 250,000 Americans are estimated to be affected by Frontotemporal Dementia (AFTD 2010). For individuals over 65, frontotemporal dementia is the 4th most common form of dementia after Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, and Lewy body dementia (Brust, 2006).

More About Causes and Symptoms

Causes, risk factors, and symptoms of FTD are somewhat different from other forms of dementia. Follow the links below to learn more.

- Causes of Frontotemporal Dementia
- Symptoms of Frontotemporal Dementia

More About Diagnosis and Treatment

Approaches to diagnosis and treatment of frontotemporal dementia are similar to other forms of dementia. Follow the links below to learn more.

- Diagnosing Dementia
- Treating Dementia
Suggestions for Caregivers

Frontotemporal dementia can be especially difficult for caregivers to deal with because, unlike other forms of dementia, it can affect younger individuals who are still working or who have children in the home. This disease can affect decision-making abilities early on, so it is important to begin making financial and legal decisions soon after the disease starts. In addition to setting up a Durable Power of Attorney, caregivers should also consider having a driving evaluation for their loved ones, before driving becomes a problem.

Care partners should encourage their loved ones to participate in support groups for individuals with frontotemporal dementia, whether online or in person. These interactions can be an important way to deal with a disease that other people often do not understand.

For other recommendations on caregiving or frontotemporal dementia, look through the rest of our Caregiver Tips section and visit the links below.

View References

