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Eating disorders and dementia

Dementia is becoming an expensive disease worldwide and its prevalence is on the rise, particularly in the developing countries. Eating disorders are common among the different types of dementia at various stages of the disease process. In the early stages, cognitive deficits cause them to eat very frequently, having forgotten they had just eaten. At the late stages, metabolic rate gets down regulated as the disease cause increasingly severe atrophy and physical activities reduce. The patients develop anorexia and together with functional dysphagia, nutritional intake and adequacy becomes a big concern for the caregivers. In addition, they have difficulties using the cutlery, recognizing food and are easily distracted by changes in the environment. The presence of behavioral problems also interferes with meal times and nutritional intake. There are ways to manipulate and increase the nutritional values of their intake at the late stages and explore the pros and cons of tube feeding for the elderly with severe dementia, the ethical consideration of tube feeding, etc.

Biography

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 She is currently in charge of a 20 bedded dementia ward in a teaching hospital in Singapore and is responsible in developing the ward and training the staff in managing elderly with delirium and dementia with challenging behavior. She is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor at National University of Singapore and Dukes Graduate Medical School.

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