Session: "Dementia Vs. Psychosis Vs. Medical Issues in the Geriatric Generation"

Date: Thursday, March 29, 2012
9:15-10:30am

Participants: Norman L. Foster, MD, Neurologist, Center for Alzheimer’s Care, Imaging and Research, University of Utah
Gordon J. Chelune, PhD, ABPP(CN), Neuropsychologist, Center for Alzheimer’s Care, Imaging and Research, University of Utah

Session Description / Summary:

Memory complaints are common in the elderly. Most of the time, they don’t indicate a dementing disease. Medical illness and medications are the most common reversible cause of dementia symptoms, but they are under-recognized as causative and often not adequately addressed. Although attention is often focused on affective disturbance, cognitive problems are a characteristic feature of several psychiatric illnesses including depression and manic-depressive disease. Neuropsychological testing can be both helpful, but also misleading to the clinician if incorrectly interpreted. In this session, a cognitive neurologist and board-certified neuropsychologist will use a case-based approach to demonstrate how dementing diseases can be distinguished from psychiatric and medical causes of memory complaint.

Session Timeline / Presentations:

9:15-9:30 History and Examination Reveals the Cause of Memory Complaints – Norman Foster
9:30-9:45 Neuropsychological Testing in Alzheimer’s, Depression and Bipolar Disease – Gordon Chelune
9:45-10:15 Case Discussion and Audience Participation
10:15-10:30 Audience Questions and Comments

Session Objectives:

As a result of attending this session, individuals will be able to:
- Conduct a differential diagnosis for individuals presenting to mental health professionals with memory complaints
- Distinguish the typical memory symptoms associated with medical and psychiatric illnesses from those usually seen in dementing disease
- Develop a longitudinal care plan, based upon the history and examination, to confirm the cause of cognitive complaints
- List the characteristic findings on neuropsychological testing that distinguish of memory problems caused by psychiatric illness and Alzheimer’s disease

Suggested Reading:
