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Therapeutic strategies for the Parkinson's patient with Alzheimer's changes: The benefits of art, structure and nutrition

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Statement of the Problem: Parkinson's disease (PD) has traditionally been treated mainly with drugs upon presentation of a tremor, stiffness or weakness by the patient which usually progresses to include "Alzheimer's Changes" or PD dementia when the patient is often transferred to a nursing facility. Epigenetics and nutrigenomics show that we can improve our health through diet and lifestyle changes, as certain pesticides are known to cause PD. Staying in the home is generally less expensive than a nursing home with better health outcomes.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: This case study presents the long-term therapeutic benefits of a preventive strategy creating a positive and safe neurological environment. A combination of therapeutic art, design, structured meals, medication, supplements, exercise, reducing environmental and food toxins was integrated to develop a workable strategy for providers and families to manage the disease. Following a fall and hospitalization, a stepwise program was developed and implemented in the home using the patient's preferences and research to allow for a smooth transition from rehabilitation into a neurologically therapeutic environment integrating art and healing interior design. The environment was made safer, a system of medication and meal administration highlighting neurologic and intestinal health was implemented and a caregiver instruction system was established. Certain nutritional supplements and regular exercise were integral treatment arms. A team approach to care was emphasized, including family members and providers.

Findings: The combination of therapeutic approaches and strategies was found to be particularly helpful and significantly increased the patient's lifespan as well as lowering the home stress level. The therapeutic strategies were put into a teaching tool, so that new caregivers and family members could be taught the program and prepare for disease progression.

Conclusion & Significance: The checklist of strategies used at different stages of the disease will aid providers, patients and their families in coping with and ameliorating PD difficulties.



Figure 1: Integrated aspects of Parkinson's disease care. An effective care plan includes nature art, a structured home environment, targeted nutrition and supplements, scheduled medication and targeted exercise for optimal patient function and care.

Biography

Elizabeth K Barber has a long interest in Integrative Medicine, extensive experience as a Parkinson's disease (PD) Care Manager as well as in Signal Transduction. She completed her BA with Honors, receiving the Robie Medal as outstanding graduate then was a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar. At Harvard, she has completed a Master's in Biology, co-authoring several publications. Her Doctorate at Oxford University on CD33 and CD34 in biochemistry included neuromuscular disease. She became a trial Lawyer/Advocate in London where she applied to organize many care, administrative and advocacy issues of PD from 2003 to 2015. She was invited to join the American Academy of Neurology in 2005 which selected her as a Palatucci Leadership Forum Advocate. She combined her knowledge of art, interior design and science to develop an integrative care plan, serendipitously discovering a PD treatment, starting Barber Innovations LLC to develop her research while managing patient care.

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