

Diagnosis: why is it important?

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10 signs of Alzheimer's Disease

- **Memory loss that affects daily life.** Examples: forgetting events, repeating yourself or relying on more aids to help you remember (sticky notes or reminders)
- **Trouble with planning or solving problems.** Examples: trouble with handling bills or cooking recipe you have used for years
- **Difficulty finishing tasks you are used to doing.** Examples: problems with cooking, driving places, recording your favorite show, shopping for items
- **Confusion with time or place.** Examples: trouble understanding an event that is happening later, losing track of dates



- **Trouble understanding visual and spatial relationships.** Examples: more trouble with balance, tripping over things at home, spilling/dropping things more often, trouble judging distance
- **New problems with speaking or writing.** Examples: trouble following or joining a conversation, trouble with finding a word you are looking for (saying “that thing on your wrist that tells time” instead of “watch”)
- **Misplacing items, especially in strange places.** Examples: placing car keys in the washer or dryer, cannot retrace steps to find item
- **Decreased or impaired judgment.** Examples: being a target of a scam, not managing money well, paying less attention to hygiene
- **Withdrawal from work or social activities.** Example: you have always gone to church but do not want to go anymore, have trouble following football games or keeping up with what’s happening
- **Changes in mood and personality.** Examples: easily upset in common situations, being fearful or suspicious



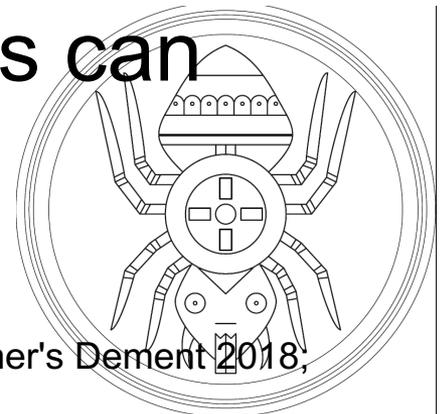
What does dementia/ncd do?

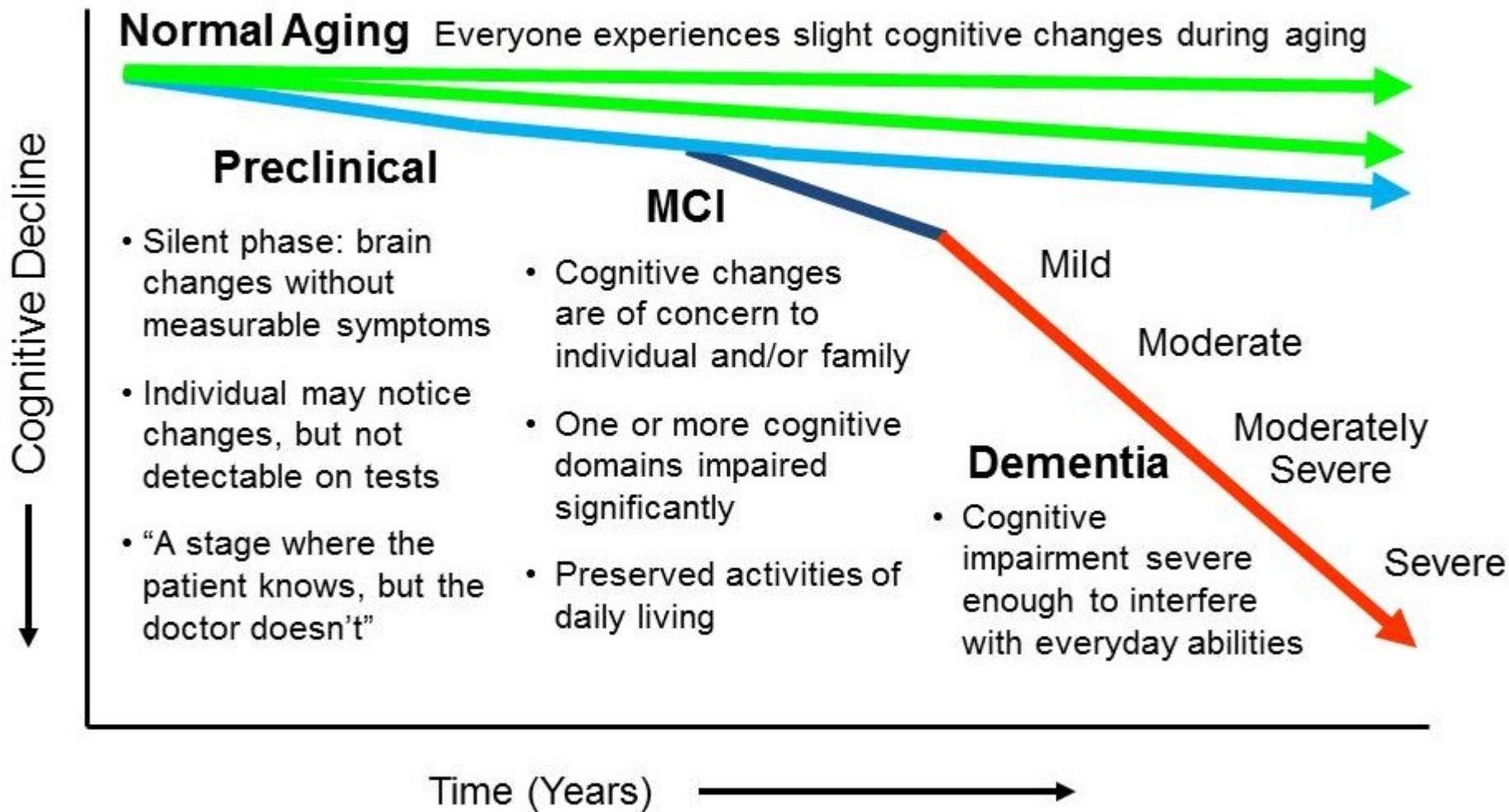
- Causes problems with
 - Remembering
 - Paying attention
 - Focusing
 - Making decisions
 - May cause difficulty with understanding
 - language

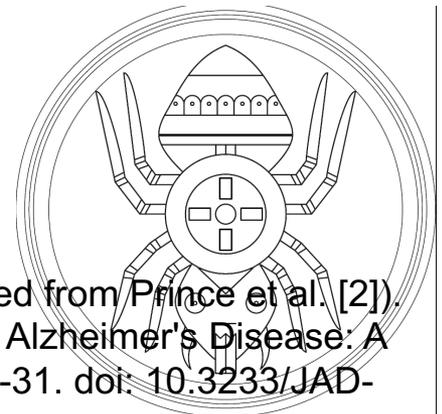
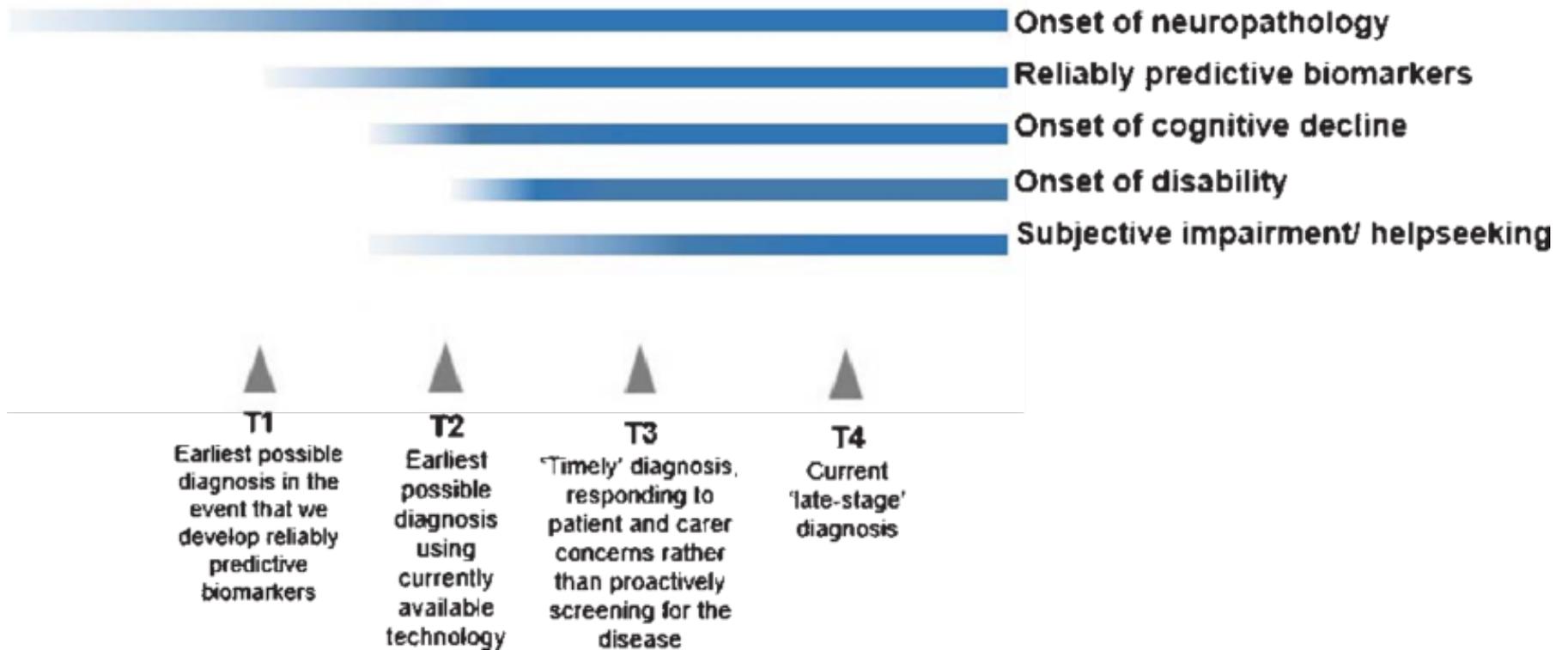


Early detection data

- Close to 90% of Americans would want to know if they had Alzheimer's disease
- <1/2 of people with dementia have been diagnosed by a physician
- <1/2 people with Alzheimer's have diagnosis documented in record
- Economic models- early diagnosis can reduce healthcare costs







Timeline of AD progression and diagnosis points on the disease continuum (adapted from Prince et al. [2]).
 Dubois B, Padovani A, Scheltens P, Rossi A, Dell'Agnello G. Timely Diagnosis for Alzheimer's Disease: A Literature Review on Benefits and Challenges. J Alzheimers Dis. 2016;49(3):617-31. doi: 10.3233/JAD-150692. PMID: 26484931; PMCID: PMC4927869.

Dementia has no cure. Why diagnose/treat?

- My number 2 question (number one is what is the difference between dementia and Alzheimer's)



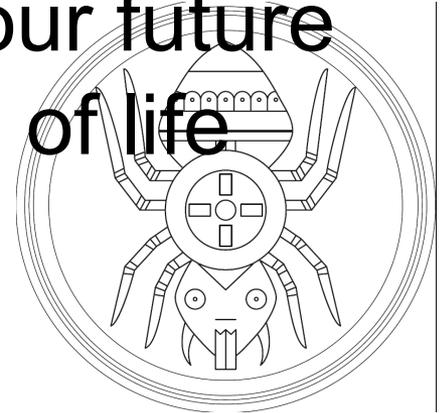
Early detection and diagnosis

- Whether it is MCI, dementia
- Detection of other causes, reversible
- prevention of stroke and risk factors of through control of blood pressure and diabetes, as well as smoking cessation
- Aerobic exercise, mental activity and social engagement



Early detection and diagnosis

- The earlier you receive a diagnosis you can receive symptom management through medications or other interventions
- Allows safety issues to be addressed early and helps caregivers be aware and prepare for what may occur related to Alzheimer's disease
- Helps empower you to plan for your future including legal, financial, and end of life decisions



Concerns:

- Diagnostic uncertainty
- Stigma
- Denial
- Cultural beliefs
- Limited treatment options
- Lack of access to services
- Depression/anxiety/fear
- Financial concerns



Timely diagnosis?

- *a diagnosis that is made at the time when an individual becomes worried enough to seek help and is evaluated by a health care provider
- We also talk about “actionable” diagnosis: getting a diagnosis when patient and family can take steps to help in management, avoiding risk, etc



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