

Cultural considerations in dementia care

Blythe S. Winchester, MD, MPH,
CMD, AGSF



Scope

- Between 2014–2060, the number of AI/ANs aged 65 and older living with dementia is projected to grow over five times
- In 2015–2017, one in six AI/ANs aged 45 and older reported subjective cognitive decline (SCD) — that is, self-reported difficulties in memory or thinking
- Nearly two-thirds of those with SCD had to give up some day-to-day activities because of these cognitive problems

Matthews K, Xu W, Gaglioti A, Holt J, Croft J, Mack D, McGuire L. (2019). Racial and ethnic estimates of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the United States (2015-2060) in adults aged ≥ 65 years. *Alzheimer's Dement.* 15(1),17-24.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). Healthy aging data portal, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health.

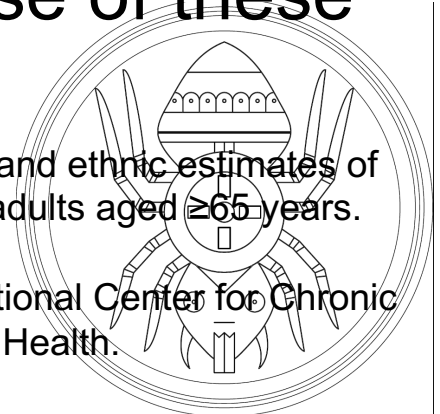
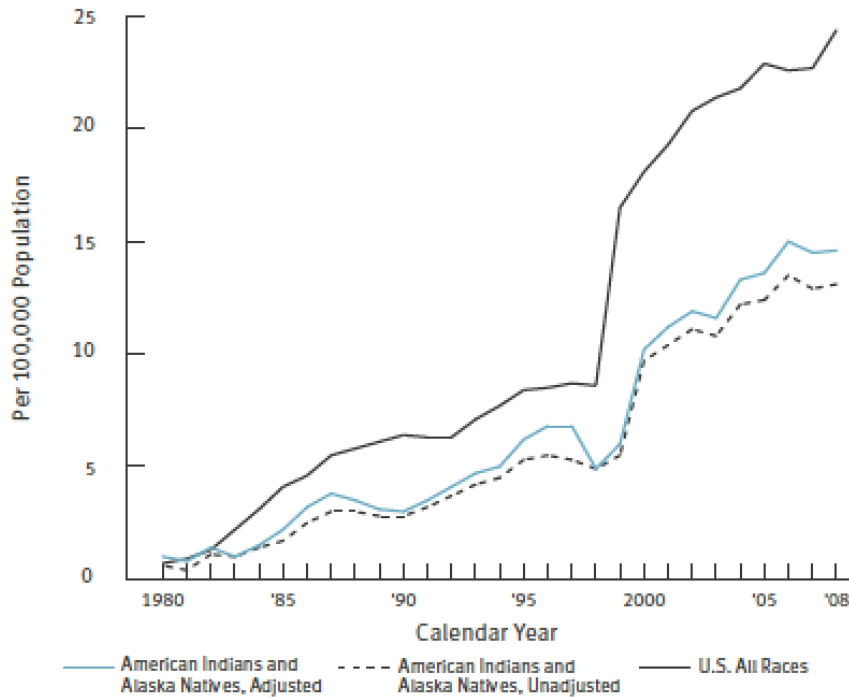


Chart 4.50 Age-Adjusted Alzheimer's Disease Death Rates



Trends in Indian Health 2014

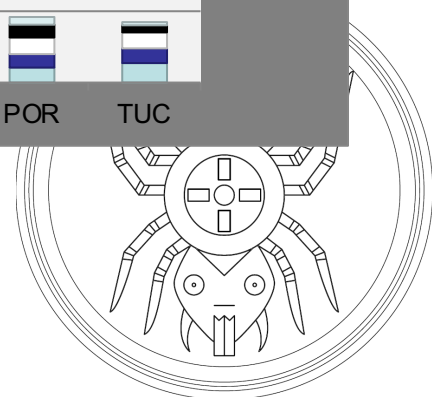
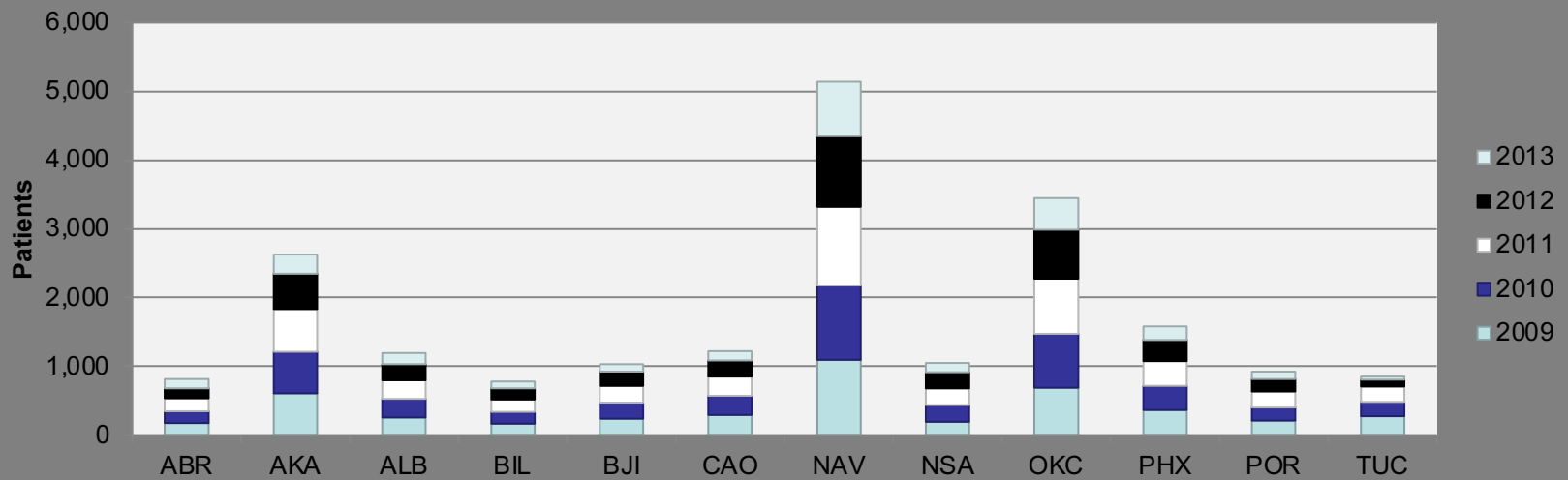
<https://www.ihs.gov/dps/publications/trends2014/>



In every region of IHS there are persons with dementia diagnoses.

IHS Annual Unduplicated Dementia Patients for Calendar Years 2009 through 2013-to-Date

Data Refreshed as of August 3rd, 2013

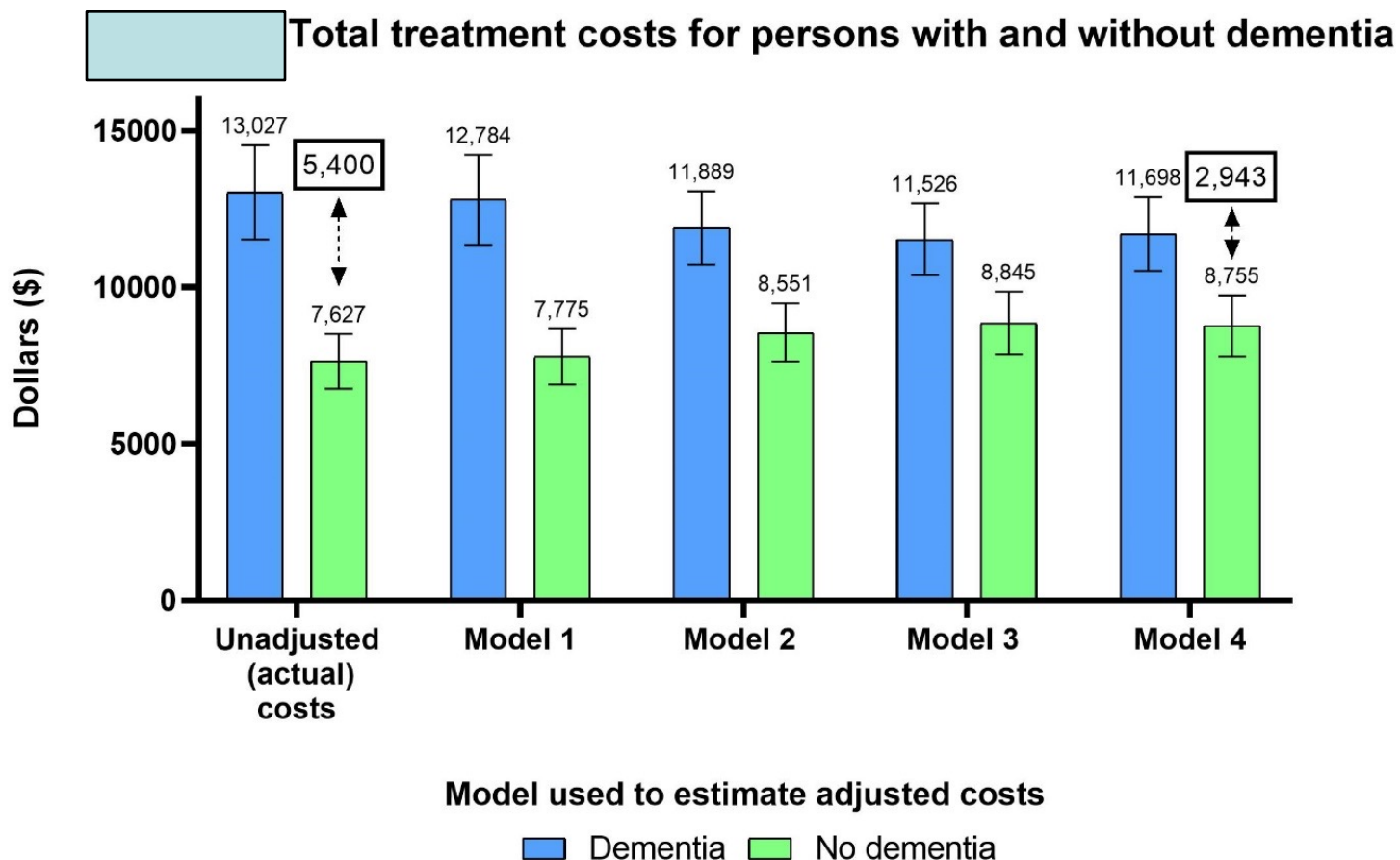


IHS/Tribal Total Treatment Costs among AI/AN Adults aged 65+ years with and without Dementia

The difference in IHS/Tribal total treatment costs between adults with and without dementia was \$5,400 in 2013.

When differences between the 2 populations were adjusted for, the difference was ~ \$3,000.

Hospitalization costs accounted for nearly all of this difference.



Risk factors

- Estimate- 1/3 late life dementias attributable to seven modifiable risk factors
 - Low education
 - Mid-life hypertension
 - Mid-life obesity
 - Diabetes
 - Physical inactivity
 - Smoking
 - depression



Risk factors

- Reduction in prevalence of these risk factors by 10-20% per decade could reduce worldwide prevalence of Alzheimer's Disease by 8-50%



Vascular dementia

Increasing age

History of heart attack, strokes or mini strokes/the leading cause of death in AI/AN is Heart disease. Stroke is the 6th****

Atherosclerosis

High cholesterol

High blood pressure

Diabetes/Likelihood of AI/AN to have DM compared to non-Hispanic white= 2.2****

Smoking/29.2 percent of AI/AN currently smoke, compared to 18.2 percent of Whites****

Obesity

Atrial fibrillation



The Wisdom of Bad Butch

think, express myself and to learn. I have always thought and still do believe that we are blessed with the capability of learning, and I'm still learning even into my 60s.

You were talking about learning and expressing yourself and still being able to think, so those are things that are most important to you.

I should put in there too that, like the quality of sleep, I have also learned that one can amplify the qualities of other things like food and exercise. I have learned that I can shoot better golf now than when I was younger. Because even though when I was younger I could drive the ball a lot further, I think psychologically that was a powerful thing for me to be involved in the thoughts of actually knocking a golf ball as far as I could or hitting a tennis ball as hard as I could. The sound of the racket or a driver hitting a golf ball was pleasant and you can't control a ball that is hit hard as well as you can one that is hit not as hard and you have more control over it.

I have learned that has a context that goes deeper than just with golf. It applies to just about everything

cure unit. After he was there, what do you remember most about him being there?

That he really didn't like it. Like most elders faced with the same situation (especially those with Alzheimer's), that is extremely painful not just for the individual but for the family members. I'm just speaking personally. I know it happens quite frequently because, from the professional standpoint, I've dealt with it for a long time. Even when I retired

I couldn't get away from it. People constantly asked me questions and I felt that due to my part of the community, i.e., being an elder, to go ahead and respond truthfully about my experiences.

And it was really difficult because, like I said, my father has always been active and energetic, and has gone all over the place, and has friends all over. Everywhere I have ever gone I have run into people that have known him-which is really neat in a way.

And watching him go through this mental deterioration was extremely painful for me. I had been through the same experience with numerous patients of other associated friends or other members of the

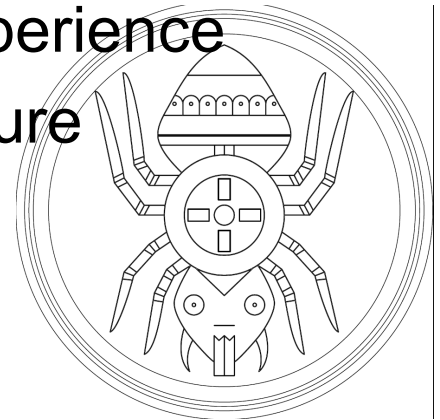
**I guess my number one
priority is to be
able to think, express
myself, and learn.**



General concepts



- Speaking without interruption
- Humor importance
- Language issues
- Traumatic experience
- Spiritual beliefs
- Traditional healing
- HIS/clinic experience
- Family structure



What historical events, traditions, customs of cultures may affect care?



Tribal Identity

- An individual's ethnic and cultural identity is defined by their beliefs and traditional practices that are community based, whether or not they physically remain in the Native community.
- However, to judge how *traditional* a person is requires information about whether they participate in traditional practices (sweats, pow-wows, healing ceremonies) or speak their Native language.



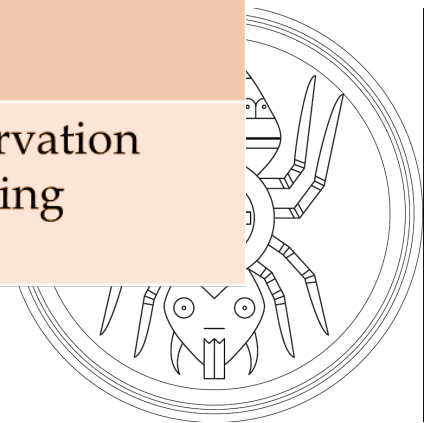
Tribal Identity and Dementia

- You may not always know who is “Native”
- Someone may be desperately trying to re-connect with tribal ways
- You do not know how “traditional” someone is until you ask
- Taking a spiritual history also helps
 - ❖ Do you culturally identify with a tribe?
 - ❖ Do you follow traditional customs of that tribe?
 - ❖ Do you know your tribe’s creation story?



Historical experiences of elders

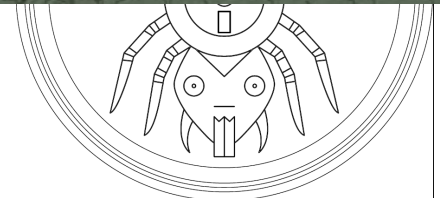
1900-1920	1920-1940	1940-1960	1960-1980	1980-Present
Reservations	Citizenship	World War II Service	Vietnam War	Education of Professionals
“Vanishing America”	Adoption of Indian Children by Whites	Relocation by BIA to Urban Areas	Indian Activism	Litigation
Forced Boarding Schools	Loss of Land by Allotment System	Forced Assimilation	Urbanization for Education & Jobs	Urban Pan-Indianism
Law Banned Spiritual Practices	Boarding Schools			Reservation Gaming



*...tell our friends that we are on the
journey west, arising from the acts of
wicked men and from our unfortunate fate.*

Elijah Hicks, October 24th, 1838

The Trail where they cried



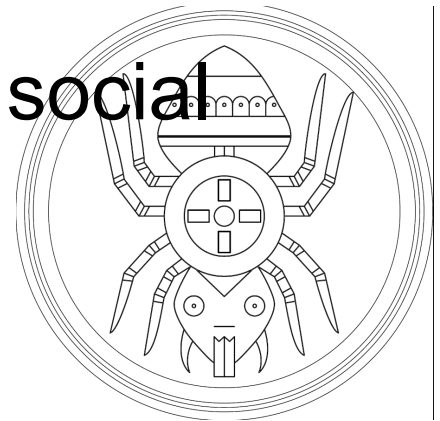
Effect of Boarding Schools

- The number of Native American children in the boarding schools reached a peak in the 1970s, with an estimated enrollment of 60,000 in 1973
- “My brothers and sisters were there, but I couldn’t speak Cherokee to them. There was one matron that spoke Cherokee that would pull me aside and help me when she could. The oak trees beside Unity we called Weeping trees because that’s where we used to go and cry because we hated being there.” – Lillian Crowe



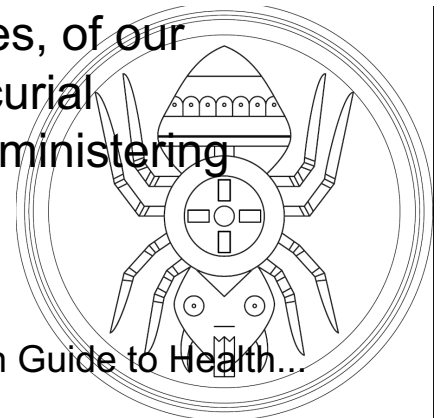
Dementia and Boarding School Experience

- Differing effects later in life
- Trauma when dealing with nursing staff/strangers
- Language use
- Sometimes improved with routine
- Question resistance to facilities
- Mood disorders, substance abuse, social issues at home



Foreman, Richard, and James W. Mahoney. *The Cherokee Physician: Or, Indian Guide to Health...* Chi-ga-u, 1975

- “The Aborigines of our country found the means of mitigating and curing their diseases, in the uncultivated wilds which gave them birth,--they knew nothing of foreign drugs, but with roots, herbs, and plants found in their own country, they mitigated and cured the diseases most common to that country. That their knowledge of the medical properties of the roots and herbs common in the American forest, is superior to that possessed by the whites will hardly be denied. Neither will be denied by those acquainted with their success, in treating disease, that they have, in many instances, performed cures, by means of roots, herbs and plants, after the usual remedies prescribed by white physicians have failed.” – Richard Foreman and Jas.W. Mahoney 1849
- “The time is not far distant, when most; if not all the diseases, of our country, will be healed without the use of calomel and mercurial preparations, and when foreign drugs will be disused by administering physicians.”



Veterans



Veterans

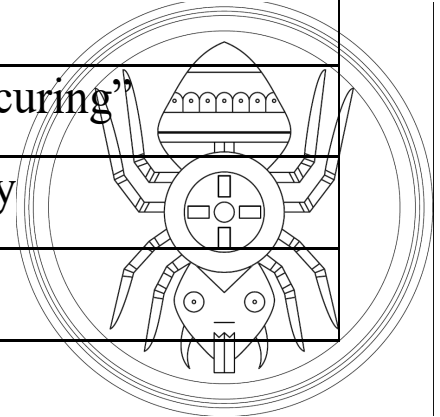
- In 2015, the largest living cohort of Veterans was the Vietnam Era. Over one-third of Veterans served during this period. A higher percentage of AIAN Veterans served in the Pre-9/11 period (19.9%), compared with Veterans of all other races (13.3%)
- AIAN Veterans showed the lowest personal incomes among Veterans of other races/ethnicity.
- AIAN Veterans' unemployment rate was higher than Veterans of other races (5.4% vs. 2.3%, respectively)
- Coordination with VA on services related to PTSD, depression, suicide, traditional healing, storytelling as healing <https://www.ihs.gov/suicideprevention/populations/veterans/>



Traditional Indian Medicine

Comparison of Traditional Indian medicine (TIM) and Modern Western Medicine (MWM)

TIM	MWM
Mind, body, spirit approach	Reductionist
Incorporates patient's beliefs of health and wellness to make diagnoses	Biochemical, physiological, anatomic data used, social and spiritual discounted
Patient taught to heal himself/herself	MD responsible for healing
Ceremonies used to teach patient wellness	Patient dependent on medical system in role of the "sick person"
Healing and harmony emphasized	Disease state emphasized
Honors the patient for restoring wellness	Honors the physician for "curing"
Hx, physical and family assessment	Hx, physical and laboratory
Herbal medicine from nature used	Pharmaceuticals



Name _____ Age _____

Is the patient alert? _____ Level of education _____

___/1
___/1
___/1
___/3
___/3
___/5
___/2
___/4
___/2
___/8

1 1. What day of the week is it?

1 2. What is the year?

1 3. What state are we in?

4. Please remember these five objects. I will ask you what they are later.

Apple Pen Tie House Car

5. You have \$100 and you go to the store and buy a dozen apples for \$3 and a tricycle for \$20.

1 How much did you spend?

2 How much do you have left?

6. Please name as many animals as you can in one minute.

0 0-4 animals 1 5-9 animals 2 10-14 animals 3 15+ animals

7. What were the five objects I asked you to remember? 1 point for each one correct.

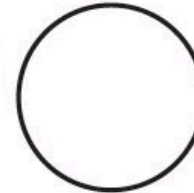
8. I am going to give you a series of numbers and I would like you to give them to me backwards. For example, if I say 42, you would say 24.

0 87 1 648 1 8537

9. This is a clock face. Please put in the hour markers and the time at ten minutes to eleven o'clock.

2 Hour markers okay

2 Time correct



1 10. Please place an X in the triangle.

1 Which of the above figures is largest?

11. I am going to tell you a story. Please listen carefully because afterwards, I'm going to ask you some questions about it.

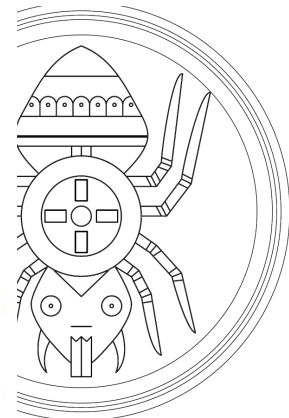
Jill was a very successful stockbroker. She made a lot of money on the stock market. She then met Jack, a devastatingly handsome man. She married him and had three children. They lived in Chicago. She then stopped work and stayed at home to bring up her children. When they were teenagers, she went back to work. She and Jack lived happily ever after.

2 What was the female's name?

2 What work did she do?

2 When did she go back to work?

2 What state did she live in?



TOTAL SCORE

SCORING		
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION		LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION
27-30	NORMAL	25-30
21-26	MILD NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER	20-24
1-20	DEMENTIA	1-19

Story Recall- Native style

I am going to tell you a story. Please listen carefully because afterwards, I'm going to ask you some questions.

“Bill grew up learning to carve. He carved a lot of famous stone wolves that made it into the museum. He married Jean, had three children, and they live across the river up in Big Cove. One time, Bill traveled out to Tahlequah for Homecoming to see his cousin Shelby. She died a couple of years ago from lung cancer. Bill and Jean now have ten grand-children and like to go on Senior trips.”

- What kind of carvings did Bill do?
- What is Bill's wife's name?
- What state did Bill go to for Homecoming?
- How did Bill's cousin die?



**Old age and treachery will
always beat youth and
exuberance.**

David Mamet

