

# Some patients with dementia may experience delayed-onset PTSD

July 7 2017

---



Regions of the brain associated with stress and posttraumatic stress disorder.  
Credit: National Institutes of Health

Delayed-onset post-traumatic symptoms in the elderly may be misdiagnosed as falling under the umbrella of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), according to a recent review.

The review describes three cases where post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms are experienced by patients suffering with [dementia](#) long after the original traumatic event.

Considering PTSD in individuals with dementia is important because PTSD is usually associated with working-age adults and is infrequently diagnosed in the elderly. In the early stages of dementia, recognising early life trauma may enable patients to access psychological therapy prior to significant cognitive decline. In patients with more advanced dementias, an awareness of earlier trauma exposure can help clinicians differentiate between delayed PTSD and BPSD in patients suffering with emotional and behavioural disturbances.

"Every patient with dementia has a unique narrative, which if captured in the earlier stages of the disease, enables clinicians and their families to understand the origin of their distress. Therefore, it is important to look for a history of previous trauma in [patients](#) with BPSD as this could be due to delayed onset PTSD," said Dr. Tarun Kuruvilla, senior author of the *Progress in Neurology & Psychiatry* review.

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Some patients with dementia may experience delayed-onset PTSD (2017, July 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-07-patients-dementia-delayed-onset-ptsd.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--