

Grandmother's Memory

“In (country), people call this kind of disease ‘senior dementia.’ We don’t need treatment for it. However, we should pay special attention to this kind of patient – care for them, love them, make their life pleasant. We should take them to nice, pleasant, beautiful places with fresh air to have fun and enjoy themselves. This is more important than going to a doctor for a diagnosis, treatment or taking medicine.”

The 68-year old (ethnic name) woman wrote that opinion after reading about memory problems and what can be done about them. She is not alone in believing that there is “no cure - nothing you can do.” It is no longer true. Today there are things that can be done.

There are many different causes of the “disease that steals your memory.” And some of them can be cured or treated. For instance, the types of memory and behavior problems that (ethnic name) grandmother has are curable. Some of the diseases that cannot be cured can be slowed down, especially if they are diagnosed early enough.

(Ethnic name) felt shame each week when she took her grandmother to the grocery store. The grandmother would forget (ethnic name) name, try to buy 10 packages of (ethnic food) when she already had 10 at home and, sometimes, would refuse to get back in the car to go home. The grandmother lived alone, and (ethnic name) worried each time she left her at her apartment.

If the family was still in (country), there would be no problem taking care of the grandmother. But (ethnic name), who lives 20 miles away in a suburb, is the nearest relative. She works everyday, and has three small children. She was desperate to do something to make sure her grandmother was safe.

A friend who is a nurse told (ethnic name) about the many different conditions that can cause memory problems and strange behavior. The friend arranged for (ethnic name) grandmother to come to the clinic where she works to have some tests. The tests can show what’s causing the problems. In fact, the tests did show that the grandmother had problems with her blood circulation and her blood sugar. She also had problems with her thyroid. This combination of conditions made her extremely confused and forgetful.

The good news is that there were medications to treat the grandmother’s problems. Her forgetfulness and confusion disappeared (ethnic name) was able to relax and not worry about her grandmother in between visits.

But what if the tests indicated that a disease in the grandmother’s brain probably caused the problem, and it was not curable? If, in fact, her confusion was caused by a certain kind of dementia, she may benefit from medication that slows down the progression of the disease. And, if that’s not possible, there is assistance available that can help (ethnic name) grandmother be safe.

The important thing to remember is that there are many causes of memory loss and strange behavior, and that some of them can be cured. But you won’t know until you have a medical assessment from a doctor who is especially knowledgeable in recognizing the cause of the memory and behavior problems and recommending appropriate treatment.