Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s Disease

By: Lauren Bell

What is Alzheimer’s Disease?
Alzheimer’s is an age-related dementia that progresses from affecting short term memory to impairing all aspects of cognition (Nelson & Tabet, 2015).

Signs and Symptoms by Stage:
- **Mild** - difficulty coming up with words, trouble remembering names when you first meet someone, and trouble planning and staying organized.
- **Moderate** - forgetful about your own life history, changes in sleep patterns, and wandering and becoming lost.
- **Severe** - unaware of surroundings, require assistance with daily activities, and difficulty communicating. (“Stages of Alzheimer’s”, n.d.)

General Warning Signs:
- Misplacing objects is a common warning sign of mild and moderate stages of Alzheimer’s Disease.
- In a 4 month study done involving 130 people with mild and moderate Alzheimer's Disease, 74% of them reported recurring incidents of misplacing items (Hamilton et al., 2009).
- Those in the study who misplaced items also had a tendency to have delusions/hallucinations.

Alzheimer’s Disease Progresses Through Distinct Stages

- **Mild**
  - Memory loss
  - Language problems
  - Mood swings
  - Personality changes
  - Diminished judgment
- **Moderate**
  - Behavioral, personality changes
  - Unable to learn/recall new info
  - Long-term memory affected
  - Wandering, agitation, aggression, confusion
  - Require assistance with ADL
- **Severe**
  - Gait, incontinence, motor disturbances
  - Bedridden
  - Unable to perform ADL
  - Placement in long-term care needed

http://www.uvm.edu