

Lewy Body Dementia

By Philippa Jones

Lewy bodies are microscopic protein deposits in the brain associated with the death of cells.

They are named after Dr Freidrich Heinrich Lewy (1885-1950) who discovered these deposits in 1912.

The term “Lewy body dementia” includes the dementia associated with Parkinson’s disease. The symptoms are the same but the Lewy bodies are found in different areas of the brain. The diagnosis an individual receives will depend on the order in which symptoms first appear.

Symptoms:

Symptoms Each case of LBD is as individual as the person who lives with it. The main symptom of LBD is dementia: progressive decline in mental abilities serious enough to interfere with normal daily activities. As this definition applies to all forms of dementia, LBD can easily be mistaken for Alzheimer's disease.

As Alzheimer's disease affects 60% of all people living with dementia, it is the most widely recognised but by no means the only form of age-related dementia.

Symptoms more specific to Lewy Body Dementia:

- Loss of spatial awareness
- Loss of problem solving ability (Alzheimers is usually memory loss)
- Extreme swings in consciousness, from alert to confused, from lucid to muddled
- Vivid and recurrent visual hallucinations (rare with Alzheimers)
- Parkinsons-like symptoms often present
- Sleep disturbances

Diagnosis

Because of its similarities to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, LBD is often misdiagnosed. At present a diagnosis of LBD can only be confirmed by autopsy but careful clinical evaluation of the patient and their symptoms can in many cases form the basis of a reasonably confident diagnosis. Early and accurate diagnosis is essential for managing this condition.

Treatment

Treatment consists of managing symptoms by both pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical intervention. Responses vary between individuals. Pharmaceutical treatment, if effective, cannot cure LBD, but may slow down its progression.

Unfortunately a cure has not yet been discovered

Lewy Body Society

The Lewy Body Society is a charity registered in England and Wales (number 1114579) and in Scotland (SC047044) whose mission is to fund research into Lewy body dementia and to raise awareness of the disease.

DLB is the second most common type of neurodegenerative dementia in older people after Alzheimer's, accounting for approximately 15-20% of all people living with dementia.

Lewy Body Society

The Lewy Body Society also hope to provide a community focus for those who live with dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) along with their carers and families.

The website provides information to help those who need to understand the disease and its impact.

<https://www.lewybody.org>

World Lewy Body Day – 28th January 2024

Last year the Lewy Body Society joined forces with all the main organisations working specifically on Lewy body dementia across the world to form [Lewy Body International](#), and together we have decided to hold a global awareness raising day. We recently welcomed Lewy Body Belgium as a member, joining groups from France, Spain, Canada, Ireland, Australia and the USA.

They have chosen 28th January as this was the birthday of Dr Friedrich Lewy (who discovered Lewy bodies in 1912) and to mark the day individuals and organisations are encouraged to participate by raising awareness and reaching out to the Lewy Body organisation in their country.

Dotty Days!

Lewy Body Dementia Awareness Week 'Dotty Days' - 2023:

26th June to 2nd July

