

Many Faces of Dementia: Beneficial for a GP?

Many Faces of Dementia is a free online course, which provides a greater understanding of the presentation, symptoms, challenges and current research in dementia aimed at anyone with an interest in dementia. The focus of the course is on four rarer causes of dementia: familial Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, and posterior cortical atrophy.

The course uses a combination of videos from people with dementia, family carers, health professionals and researchers, making it not only engaging and interesting, but grounded in real life experience from those living and working with dementia on a daily basis. Supported by world leading experts such as Professor Nick Fox, it offers a rare opportunity to hear from those at the forefront of research and clinical practice.

Ultimately, we reviewed this course with a question of: *is this course beneficial for a GP?* The course is time consuming and at a period when GPs are struggling for time, they may have more pressing demands. The four types of dementia presented in this course, are relatively rare and despite more awareness needed within general practice, the number of cases a GP will see in their career is small and perhaps disproportionate to the length and detail of this course.

Despite this there are some very important facets of information a GP can take from this course. Particularly useful clinical information included a deeper understanding of why it is important to make a more detailed diagnosis than simply 'dementia', as the particular medical and social challenges faced by people with each condition are highlighted. It also gives an understanding of the presentation of the rarer forms of dementia, and reminds us that these may not be detected with routine screening memory tests, as memory can be relatively well preserved.

It also steps away from the medical focus and encourages broader considerations, including the needs of families. It creates a clear picture of some of the difficulties families face and has helpful links throughout the course which a GP can use to direct family members to for further support.

This is a well-developed, interesting and valuable course, which with some refinement and tailoring for a GP audience could be a great educational resource.

Dr Nathan Davies

NIHR School of Primary Care Research Post-Doctoral Fellow

Dr Jenny Hopwood

Academic Clinical Fellow, and ST4 GP Registrar

Centre for Ageing Population Studies, Research Department of Primary Care and Population Health, UCL, Royal Free Campus, Rowland Hill Street, London, NW3 2PF