

Is it a “Senior Moment” or Something More? (*Interview Transcripts*)

Charles Lawler, M.D., Internal/Geriatric Medicine Physician, OSF HealthCare

“Usually there’s cognitive decline, and cognition is previously learned information that you should be able to use but the brain just isn’t good at getting it out anymore. One of the other domains that’s very prevalent is your memory. A lot of people have memory issues, and they don’t necessarily have dementia.” (:27)

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“Everyone has these forgetful moments that people call ‘senior moments’ where you walk into a room and forgot why you went in there. But I think bigger issues would be other cognitive domains, so if you’re paying your bills incorrectly or any other type of executive functioning where you’re struggling and you should be able to do it or you were able to do it a year or two ago. That could be an early sign that you might have some sort of dementia going on.” (:34)

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“Ironically a lot of people who think they have problems, studies have shown that they’re less likely to have problems. But if you notice a family member has difficulty with memory – if they’re repeating themselves, like asking the same question at dinner or if someone like your mom calls you on the phone and says the same thing that she said yesterday – then that would be a concern.” (:26)

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“You can have Alzheimer’s for 12, 13 years and it’s a slow progressive disorder. A big part is helping the family cope and support systems, because it’s very difficult for someone to take care of someone with Alzheimer’s 24/7.” (:16)

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“Having Alzheimer’s does not necessarily mean that you still can’t have quality of life – that you can’t function in society. You still have something to say, something to add. There’s a lot of in between when you get to that level and still having good quality of life.” (:21)