

Provider Checklist for Treating a Confused Elder

History and Physical

- Mental Status Exam (e.g. MMSE)
- History of memory loss (e.g. sudden or gradual change, difficulty in performing familiar tasks, changes in personality or mood)
- Assessment for mental illness
- Evaluate for depression and treat, if present
- A functional assessment of the patient including feeding, bathing, dressing, mobility, continence, ability to manage finances and medications
- Assessment for substance abuse or medication mismanagement
- Assessment for recent physical trauma (e.g. falls, head injury, abuse)

Laboratory Tests

Routine lab tests:

- Complete Blood Count
- Electrolytes
- Blood Urea Nitrogen
- Creatinine
- Random Blood Sugar
- Calcium

Dementia Screening tests:

- TSH
- B12

Contingent lab tests (only order if patient's history indicates)

- Syphilis serology (MHA-TP or RPR)
- HIV
- Heavy metal

Diagnostic Tests

- MRI or CT scan only if clinically indicated (for a list of conditions, consult below listed guideline *.)
- Rule out presence of delirium

Social and Safety Issues

- Assess if patient is safe to drive and report to local health department if indicated
- Assessment of decision making capacity
- Discuss Advance Directives
- Caregiver assessment which includes identification of primary caregiver, assessment of caregiver's capacity to manage person's needs (physically, emotionally, etc.)
- Assessment for elder abuse

Refer to social worker or Alzheimer's Association for:

- Enrollment in Safe Return (an identification program for memory impaired persons)
- Information on caregiver support groups as appropriate
- Information and education on dementia and disease course
- Referrals to adult day centers, respite services and information on legal and financial planning

* A useful diagnostic guideline is the *Clinical Practice Guideline on Early Alzheimer's Disease: Recognition and Assessment* developed by the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality. To obtain a copy, contact 1-800-358-9295.

This checklist is based in part on the *California Guidelines for Alzheimer's Disease Management*. To receive a copy of the Guidelines, visit the Alzheimer's Association, Los Angeles' website at www.alzla.org or call 323-938-3370.