



Health Bulletin



Medical Treatment Provides Hope For Alzheimer's Disease Patients And Their Families

(NAPSA)—Approximately 4.5 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's disease—however, about half are undiagnosed. As the U.S. population ages over the next half-century, the number of Americans with Alzheimer's is expected to grow to 14 million. But, today more can be done to help families living with Alzheimer's disease than ever before. Although there is no cure, there are ways to slow the progression of disease symptoms and help people with Alzheimer's, like 86-year-old Della, to function longer. As Della's story demonstrates, if people with Alzheimer's disease do not respond to one treatment, physicians and families should not give up hope—another medication may work for them.

Della's caregiver and devoted granddaughter, Kim, was struggling to cope with the behavioral and memory problems that Alzheimer's had caused in her grandmother. Della had become agitated, paranoid and was having unpleasant outbursts. She was so forgetful that she could not recall whether or not she had eaten. Because Kim did not feel it was safe to leave her grandmother home alone, she had to leave her job to provide full-time care for Della.

When Dr. Agha first saw Della she was argumentative, aggressive and refused to talk to anyone—including him. After an evaluation, he diagnosed her with moderate Alzheimer's disease and started an Alzheimer's disease



Older Americans may be glad to know there are treatments available for Alzheimer's disease.

medication. After some time, Dr. Agha did not see a positive response, so he stopped Della's initial treatment, and started her on a different Alzheimer's medication called Exelon® (rivastigmine tartrate). Exelon is a prescription medication that is used to slow the progression of the symptoms of mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease.

Exelon therapy has made a world of difference to both Della and Kim. Della is now willing to attend her medical appointments. Alone during the day, she completes daily tasks, including bathing and dressing herself, and she can even operate a toaster. Kim, who has since returned to work, has had a piece of her life returned to her, thanks to her grandmother's response to treatment with Exelon.

"Back at work, Kim feels confident that her grandmother is

okay. On top of that, Della is a much more pleasant person," said Dr. Agha and his healthcare team.

Families play a major role in caring for people with Alzheimer's disease. At least 70 percent of people with the illness live at home, where family members and friends provide 75 percent of their care. Typically, the primary family caregiver is the spouse or a grown child of the patient.

Early diagnosis and symptom relief may help to ease the stress of caregivers. Della's story is one example of the difference that medical treatment can make in the lives of Alzheimer's patients and their families. Because every patient responds differently, results may vary.

If you are concerned about possible signs of Alzheimer's disease in yourself or in a loved one, you can request an "ID.A.D. (Identify Alzheimer's Disease) Resource Kit" by calling toll-free 1-877-439-3566 or via the Internet at www.nfcacares.org or at www.AlzheimersDisease.com. The free kit contains educational materials such as a video, a memory questionnaire and informational brochures specifically for family caregivers.

For information about treatment with Exelon, consult with your doctor, or visit www.AlzheimersDisease.com. The most common side effects associated with Exelon are stomach-related, such as nausea and vomiting.

Note to Editors: EXELON® (rivastigmine tartrate) is approved for mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. EXELON use is associated with significant stomach-related side effects, including nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, and weight loss. If therapy is interrupted for longer than several days, treatment should be reinitiated with the lowest daily dose in order to avoid the possibility of severe vomiting and its potentially serious consequences. In clinical studies, stomach-related side effects occurred more frequently as doses were increased. The weight loss associated with EXELON occurred more commonly among women receiving high doses in clinical studies. Because these side effects can be serious, caregivers should be encouraged to monitor for these adverse events and inform the physician if they occur. People at risk for certain heart conditions or stomach ulcers should notify their doctor before starting EXELON therapy. In clinical studies, some patients also experienced fainting, weakness and upset stomach. For more information, please see complete prescribing information at www.AlzheimersDisease.com.