

Age Associated Memory Impairment (AAMI)

Fact Sheet

What is Age Associated Memory Impairment (AAMI)?

- AAMI is a common condition characterized by mild memory decline that occurs in many adults as part of the normal aging process.¹
- AAMI is believed to be the result of biological and chemical changes in the aging brain as well as a general shrinkage of brain volume. It is not a neurological disorder.¹
- AAMI happens because, like every other aging organ, the brain's functioning declines with age.¹
- Not all memory problems are Alzheimer's disease. Numerous names have been given to common memory problems that occur in older persons that are not necessarily caused by serious neurological problems such as Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.²
- AAMI is an age-related memory complaint, versus Alzheimer's disease, which is a neurodegenerative disease.²

What is the Prevalence and Causes of AAMI?

- AAMI appears to be highly prevalent across diverse groups of individuals.³
- Close to one in three people aged 60 to 78 is affected by AAMI.²
- AAMI is attributed to normal biological changes that occur as a person ages.^{1,4,5,6}
- In order to better understand this condition, researchers are studying these biological changes, as well as genetic and environmental factors that may have an impact on symptoms of AAMI.¹

Diagnosis

- For a diagnosis of AAMI, an individual must meet the following criteria:^{1,7}
 - Presence of self-reported memory decline;
 - Evidence of memory loss, as determined by performance on a standardized memory test;
 - Adequate intellectual functioning and absence of dementia or other memory-affecting diseases (e.g. stroke) in a person of 50 years or older.
- AAMI can be diagnosed following:¹
 - Neurological examinations;
 - Neuropsychological and psychiatric evaluations;
 - A physical examination including laboratory tests;
 - A review of the individual's past medical history; and
 - A review of the medications the individual is currently taking.

- This evaluation is generally complemented by: ¹
 - An individual's symptoms;
 - The speed of symptom onset;
 - How the symptoms occur (presentation); and
 - The progression of symptoms over time.

Related Complications

- A significant number of elderly individuals live with mild memory problems that are part of the normal aging process. Although many of these problems only mildly interfere with daily life, they may be troublesome to the person experiencing them and affect his or her productivity and quality of life. ¹
- Individuals suffering from AAMI often have difficulty in the following areas:^{1,3,4}
 - Remembering words;
 - Remembering names of new acquaintances;
 - Misplacing objects;
 - Difficulty remembering multiple items to be purchased or multiple tasks to be performed;
 - Problems remembering telephone numbers;
 - Difficulty recalling information quickly.

How can Memory be Preserved?

- Memory management strategies that may help an individual stay sharp and keep their mind active include:^{1,8,9}
 - Eating a healthy diet;
 - Getting regular exercise;
 - Staying socially active;
 - Reducing stress;
 - Doing crosswords;
 - Playing chess, or
 - Learning a new language.
- Science-based natural health supplements may play an important role in maintaining memory function.¹⁰

Sources

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