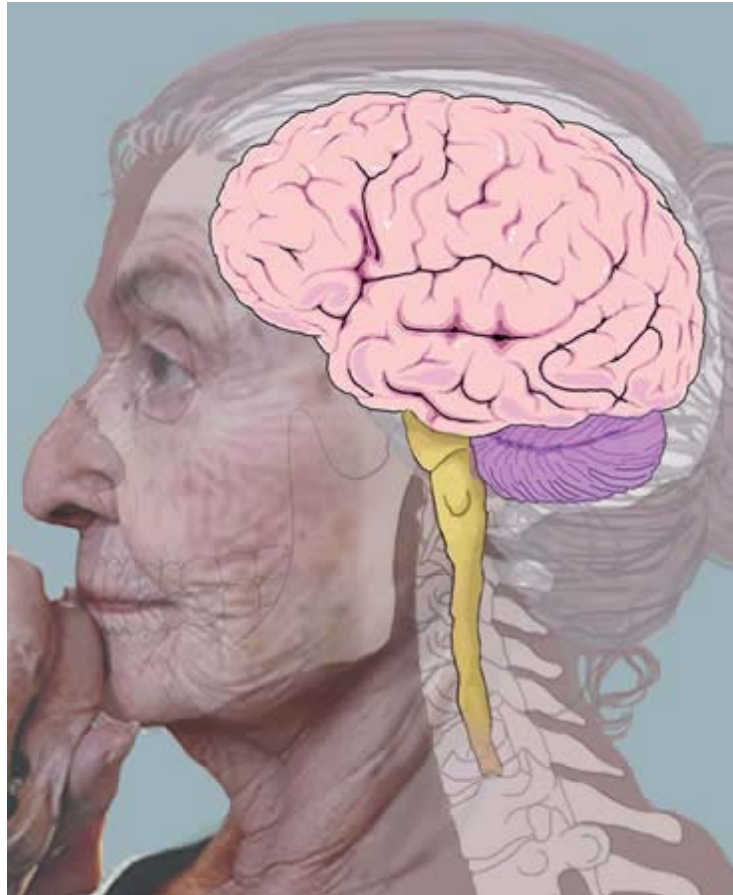


The Cerebellum, Brain Stem and Sub-cortical Regions

Beneath the cerebral cortex is the sub-cortex which links the cortex to structures such as the thalamus and the basal ganglia. They are important in control of voluntary movement, balance, and coordination, swallowing and the regulation of involuntary thought processes.



The cerebellum and brain stem control voluntary movement and balance functions; the brain stem controls all involuntary body systems, which include the heart, lungs, and digestive system. The cerebellum and brain stem are often not impaired until the late stages of the dementia. Sub-cortical dementia are a feature of vascular dementia, Parkinson's Disease and Huntington's Disease.

Associated Behaviours

- As coordination and balance functions are lost, the person often loses the ability to walk safely. The person becomes bedridden and, with increasing immobility, the body becomes more prone to pneumonia and pressure ulcers.

- Swallowing difficulties may occur causing choking spells and increasing the risk for aspiration pneumonia, which can lead to serious illness and/or death
- Sub-cortical deficits include slowing of thought processes (bradyphrenia), difficulty in memory retrieval, and problems with changing cognitive strategies (mindset).
- Sub-cortical dementia is also more likely to be associated with abnormalities of affect, motivation and emotional. People with sub-cortical dementia often show early symptoms of depression, clumsiness, irritability or apathy.

Effective Care Strategies

- Use frequent prompts to assist with recollections
- Provide step-by-step instructions while allowing the person to proceed independently with each step, thereby preserving privacy and dignity.
- Avoid distractions which compete for attention.