The top ten reasons to make a timely diagnosis of dementia

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Reasons why some people disagree with an “early” diagnosis of dementia

• There is no effective treatment which cures dementia.
• It causes unhappiness telling people the diagnosis.
• There is not sufficient post diagnostic support available in my area.
• It is not in the best interests of the patient.
The top ten reasons to make a timely diagnosis of dementia

1 - Diagnosis helps the patient receive the correct treatment. Symptoms of dementia can be due to other causes and making the correct diagnosis helps ensure the patient receives the most appropriate treatment.

2 - Diagnosis enables the patient and the Carer to receive the support they need e.g. from social services, day centres, restbite care, community mental health team, occupational therapists and Carer support groups.

3 - Diagnosis allows the patient and the Carer to make decisions about the future especially regarding their financial affairs.
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4 - A diagnosis of Vascular Dementia ensures the Clinician makes appropriate efforts in treating cardiovascular risk factors.

5 - Diagnosis enables the patient and the Carer to receive appropriate financial benefits and support such as Disability Living Allowance and Council Tax reduction.

6 - Diagnosis enables advanced care planning and help with setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney.
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7 - If the diagnosis of dementia is known, this will also help in treating other medical problems e.g. taking extra time to explain things to patients, setting up safer ways of taking medication as well as understanding and offering extra support if someone has to come into hospital as an inpatient for another reason.

8 - Getting the right diagnosis is also important for research and understanding more about the causes of dementia and may help in finding better treatments for dementia in the future.
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9 - Better recognition of how important and common the causes of dementia are is vital for planning services to provide the help and support people need, both locally and nationally.

10 - Timely diagnosis is important in that it can allow support to be provided for people and their families and help to avert emergency admissions to a hospital or a care home.
Summary

• A timely diagnosis helps people receive the correct treatment, receive the support they need and the appropriate benefits.

• It enables a person to make decisions about their future care and about their finances.

• It helps treat other medical problems, any modifiable risk factors and should reduce emergency admissions.

• It can also help in research looking for better treatments for dementia in the future as well as help to ensure there are sufficient services for patients with dementia in an area.