

# **Alzheimer Society of Manitoba 2016 January Awareness Forum**

## **Dementia...Are You Worried?**

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**Do changes in memory, thinking  
or emotional status always mean  
that a person has a form of  
dementia?**

# What are some of the conditions that mimic dementia symptoms?

- \* Stress
- \* Sleep deprivation
- \* Depression
- \* Poor nutrition
- \* Fatigue
- \* Pain
- \* Heavy metal toxicity

# What is considered normal (aging)?

Functions that improve or remain stable by aging:

- \* Accumulated and general knowledge
- \* Verbal ability, vocabulary
- \* Some numerical abilities
- \* Comprehension

# Functions that decline by normal aging:

- \* Novel problem solving
- \* Processing speed
- \* Reasoning
- \* Memory
- \* Executive functions
- \* Working memory

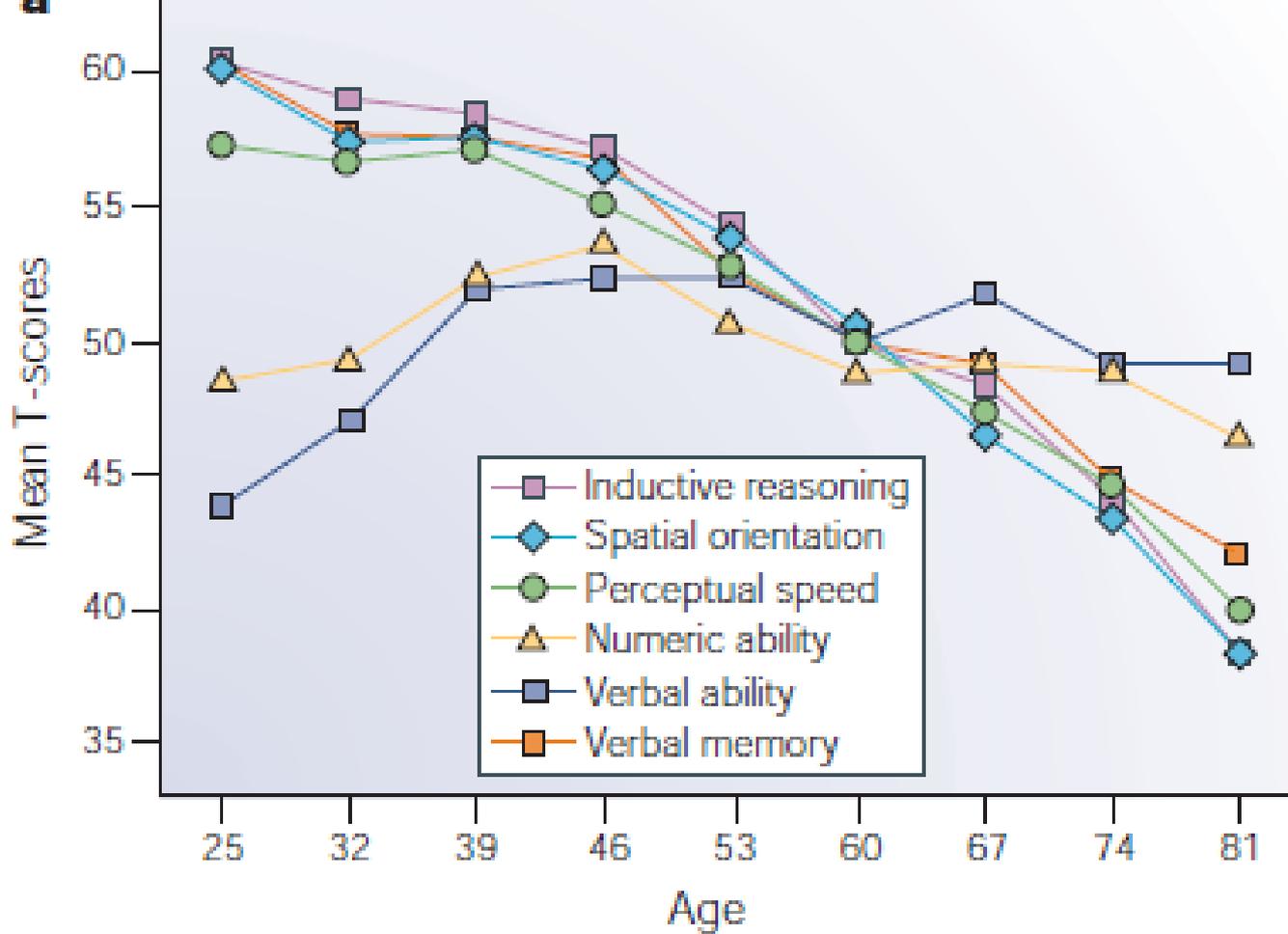
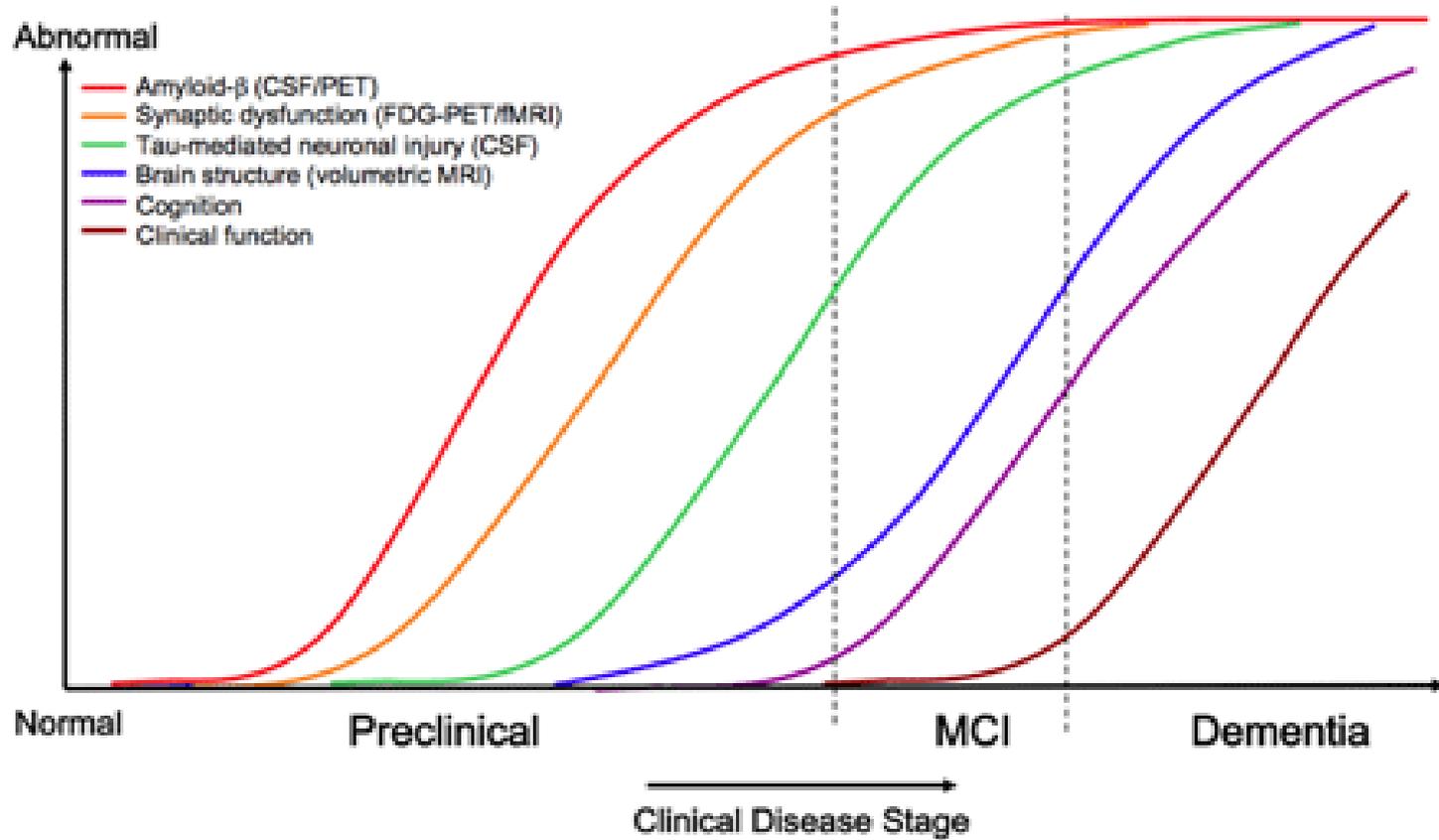


Figure 3 Aspects of cognitive decline across the population

[Ian J. Deary](#) et al., Age-associated cognitive decline

# Why does a diagnosis take so long?

- \* Gradual onset
- \* High premorbid cognitive reserve can sometimes mask symptoms of dementia.
- \* Are mistaken by symptoms of other diseases
- \* Denial
- \* Considered as age associated forgetfulness.
- \* Symptoms are attributed to the patient's personality, etc.



*Lancet Neurol. 2010.*

# Early signs

- \* Memory
- \* Language
- \* Planning and problem solving
- \* Calculations
- \* Visuospatial: driving
- \* Confusion with time and place
- \* Change in mood and personality
- \* Social withdrawal

# Mild Cognitive Impairment

- \* Subjective or proxy cognitive complaint; objective memory impairment (decline from premorbid levels); relatively intact functional ability; not demented.

# Mild Cognitive Impairment

- \* Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) affects between 5 and 20 per cent of the population aged 65 or over. It affects cognitive function to a greater extent than would be expected, but not to such extent that it precludes independent living.
- \* Some cases of MCI are treatable. Some cases (one in six) progress to dementia within a year.

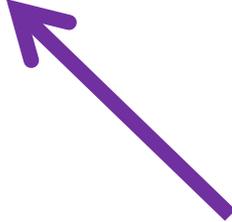
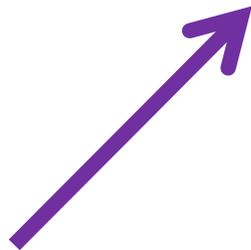
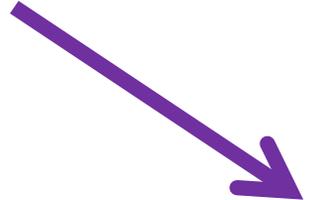


**Environmental**

**Biological**

**Genetic**

**Why me?**



**Life style**

**Gender**

**Age**

# Early risk factors which can be modified by public health approaches

- \* Smoking
- \* Obesity
- \* Midlife high blood pressure (screening and management)
- \* Cholesterol (screening and management)
- \* Diabetes (screening and management)
- \* Depression

# Actions we can take to reduce risk of dementia:

- \* Physical activity
- \* Mediterranean diet
- \* Not smoking
- \* Not drinking excessive amounts of alcohol
- \* Social/mental activity (?)