

# *Is It Dementia or Alzheimer's?*

Presented at the

*Capacity to Care: Building Competency in  
Geriatric Mental Health Care*

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by

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# *Alzheimer's Disease Center's*



# *Emory ADRC*

- Early detection of memory disorders
- Cutting edge clinical trials
- State of the art treatment
- Support for people with Alzheimer's & their families
- Education of healthcare providers & the community



# *Objectives*

- Alzheimer's disease symptoms
  - Diagnostic process
- Strategies for Alzheimer's disease symptoms
  - Memory, mood & behavior symptoms
- Research Progress



# *Definition of Dementia:*

- A syndrome of progressive decline
- Gradually erodes intellectual abilities
- Results in cognitive & functional deterioration
- Leads to impairment of social and occupational functioning'

# *“Dementia”*

- It does not tell you what is **CAUSING** the dementia
- Is an general term
- It is not a diagnosis
- Therefore you do not know how to treat the dementia



# *Cognitive Changes in Dementia*

- Memory
- Language
- Spacial
- Attention
- Executive Function
  - Ability to plan and organize
  - Decision making capacity

# Diagnosing Memory & Cognitive Problems

Physicians today use a number of tools to diagnose:

- a detailed patient history
- information from family and friends
- physical and neurological exams
- lab tests
- neuropsychological tests
- imaging tools such as CT scan, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).





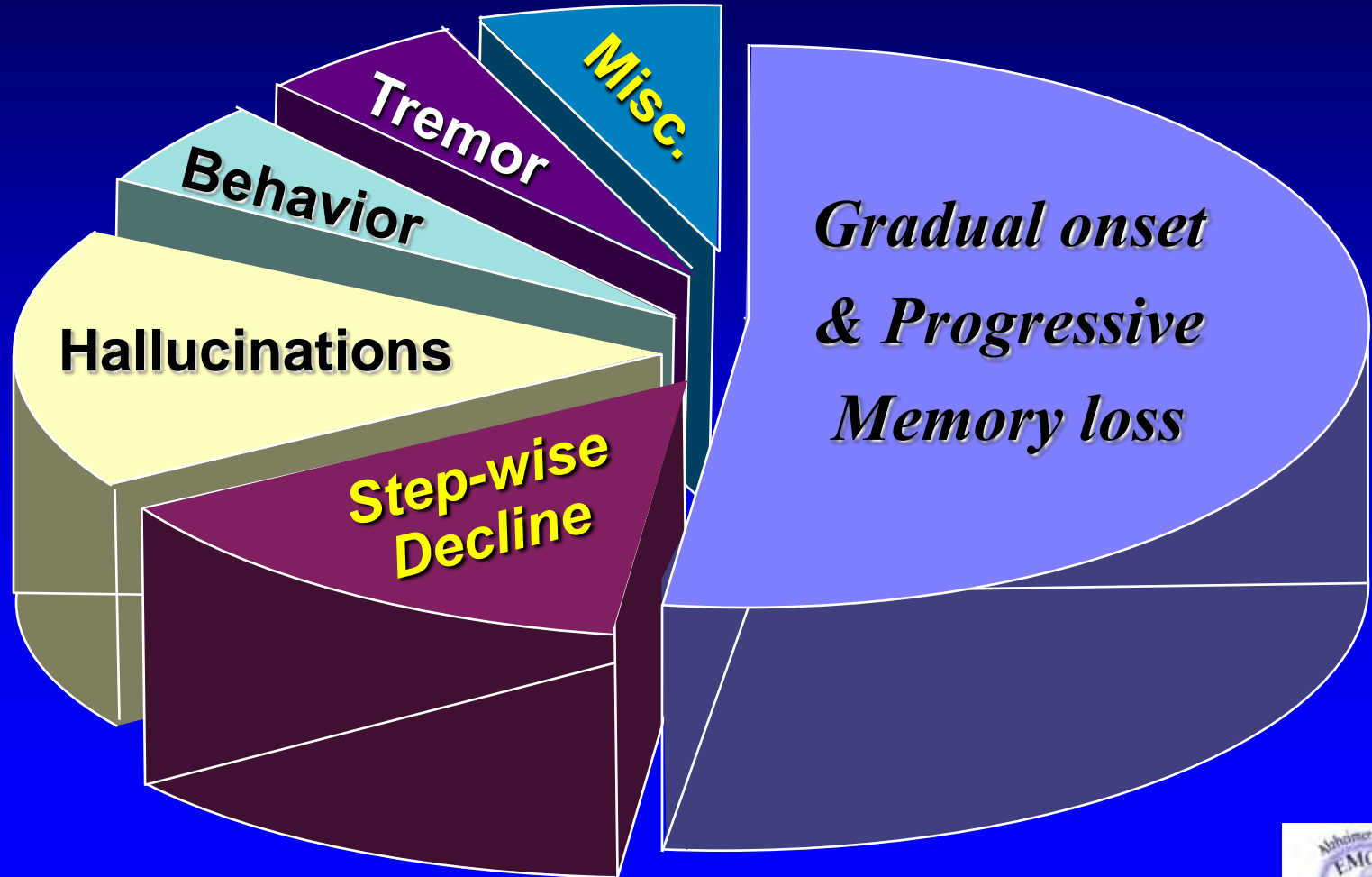
# *History of Onset of Problem*

## How Did the Problem Develop?

- Was there a sudden onset? Did the problem get worse over hours or days?
- Has there a stepwise progression
- Has the problem gradually gotten worse over months or years?



# *Early Symptoms Provide Clues*



# *Causes of Dementia that MAY be reversible*

- Delirium
  - Infections
  - Hospitalization and/or surgery
  - Dehydration
  - Medication reaction
- B12 Deficiency
- Thyroid Disease
  
- Depression

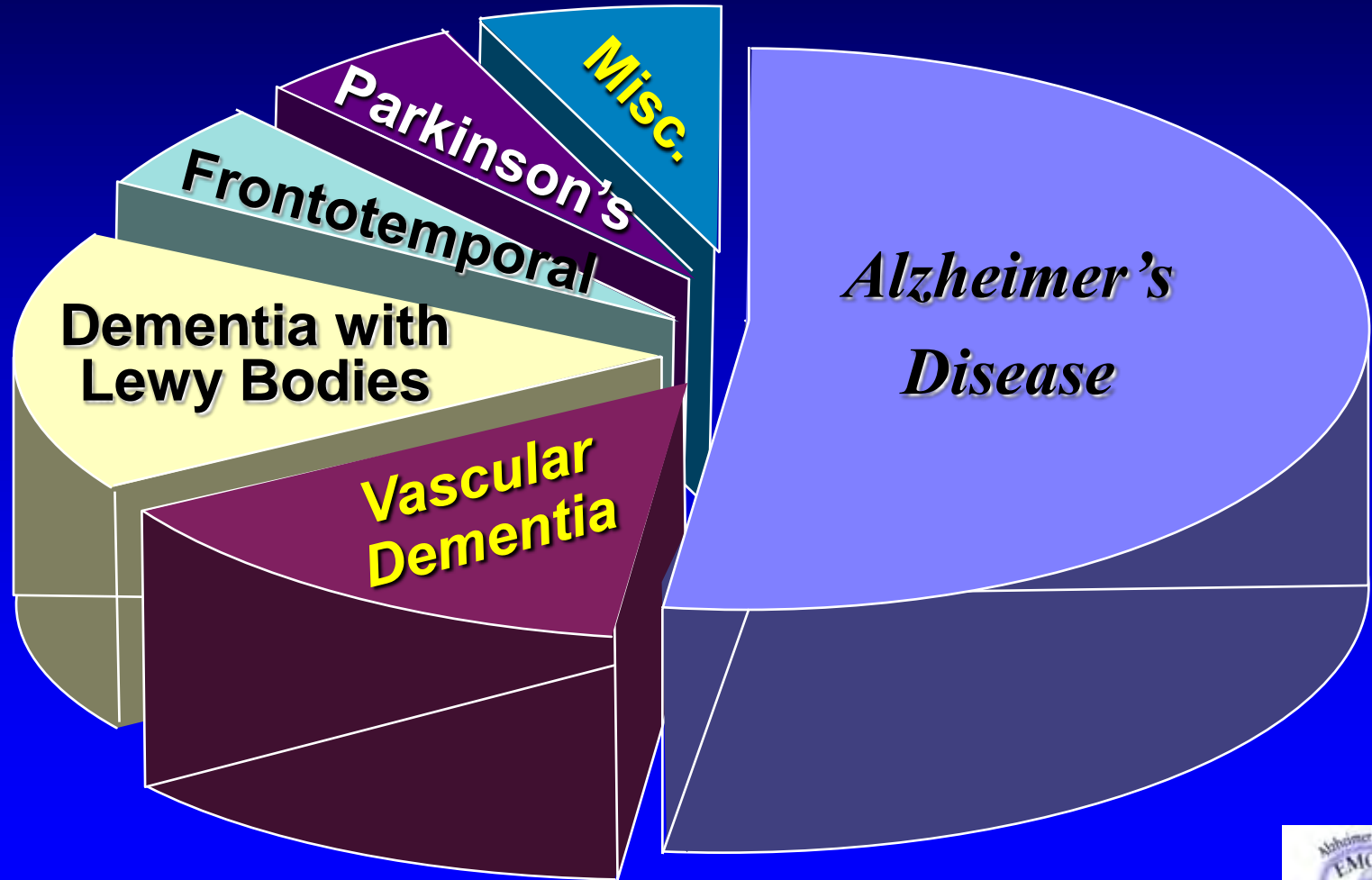


# *Irreversible Causes of Dementia*

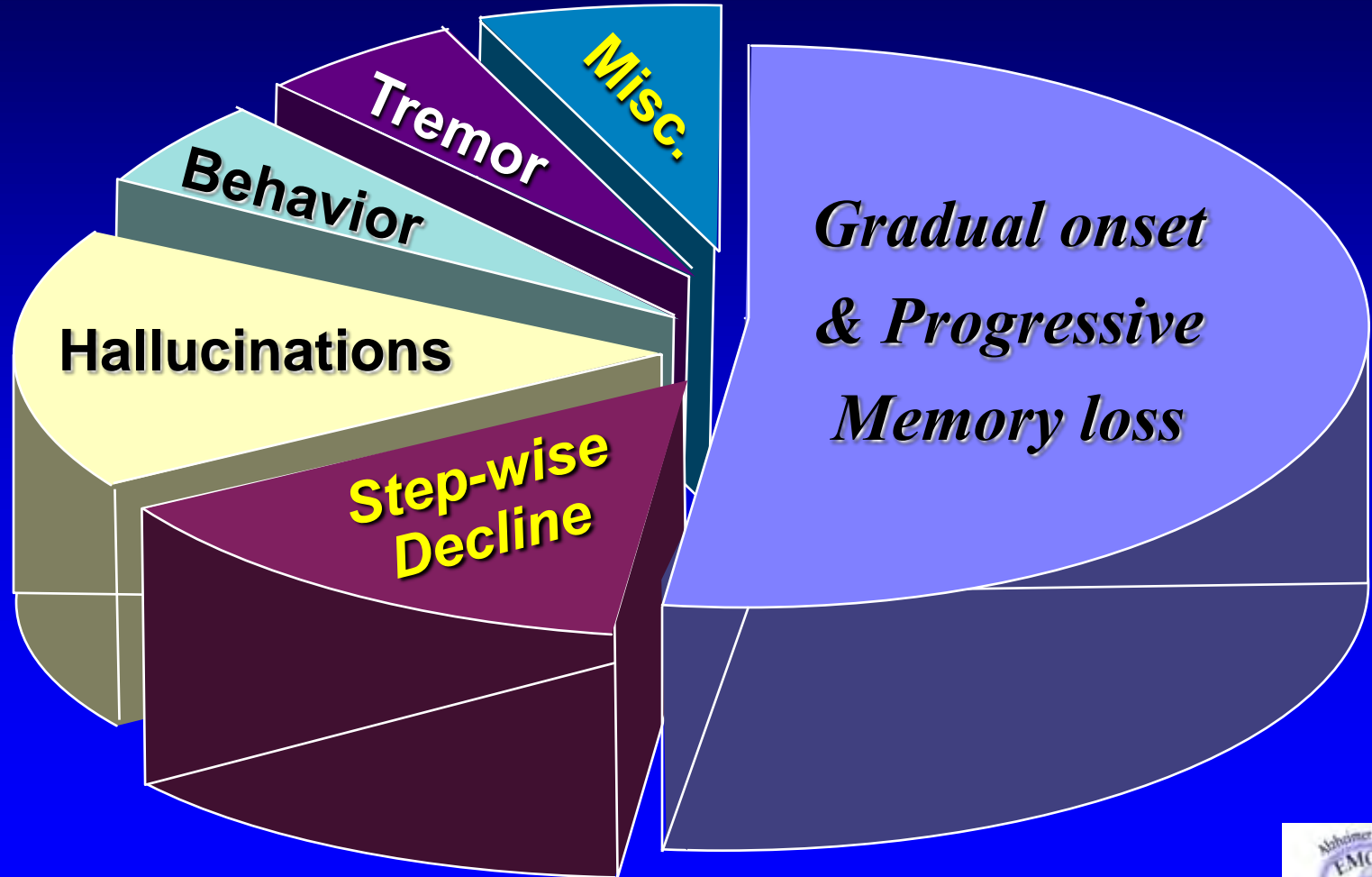
- Alzheimer's Disease
  - Vascular Dementia (caused by strokes)
  - Frontal-temporal Dementia
  - Lewy Body Dementia
- There are many other lesser known disorders that cause irreversible dementia



# *What is the Diagnosis*



# *Early Symptoms Provide Clues*



# *Treatment for Alzheimer's Disease*

There are two classes of medications approved for the treatment of AD:

Cholinesterase inhibitors

Aricept

Razadyne - Galantamine

Exelon

Memantine - Namenda

