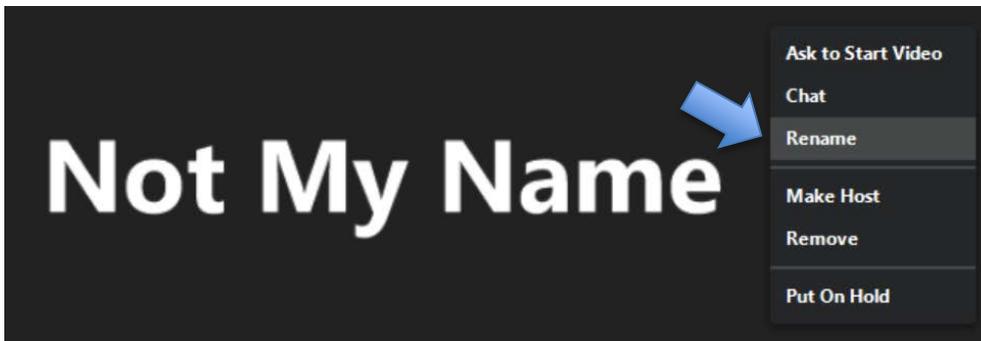




## ECHO Idaho: Behavioral Health in Primary Care

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## ECHO Idaho: Behavioral Health in Primary Care

Treating Dementia with Behavioral Disturbance

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Reiko Emtman, M.D.

Geriatric Psychiatrist, Boise VAMC

The speaker has no relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose.

# Learning Objectives

- Identify relevant information to gather in HPI
- List 3 behavioral management strategies for agitation
- Reason about medication management strategies for aggression

# What is behavioral disturbance?

- Aggression
- Wandering
- Psychotic symptoms
- Mood symptoms
- Disinhibition
- Sleep disturbances

# Evaluation: HPI

- Frequency, duration, context
- New physical symptoms
  - Body language
- Medication side effects
- Mood
- Sensory deprivation
- Caregiver attributes

# Evaluation: Medication Side Effects

- Anticholinergics
  - Anticholinergic antidepressants
  - Urinary antispasmodics
  - Over the counter: diphenhydramine, sleep aids
  - Benzodiazepines
- Special considerations for Vascular Dementia

# Treatment: Behavioral Interventions

- SAFETY ASSESSMENT
  - Screening for abuse, driving, fire hazards, access to guns
- Pleasant events
- Consistent routine
- Scheduled toileting
- Caregiver support:
  - Adult day health
  - Home health services: nursing, nutrition, PT, OT
  - Alz.org

# Treatment: Medications

- Antidepressants
  - SSRI/SNRI
  - Trazodone vs. mirtazapine
- Misc:
  - Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors
  - Dextromethorphan/quindine
  - Gabapentin
- Antipsychotics

# Medication Pitfalls: a cautionary tale

- Benzodiazepines
  - Paradoxical agitation
  - Increased risk of delirium, falls and withdrawal symptoms
- Antipsychotics in Lewy Body Dementia
  - Use acetylcholinesterase inhibitor instead
- Antipsychotics and urinary incontinence

# Key Points

- Assessment should focus on safety
- Behavioral interventions are first line and more effective than medications
- Medications should be prescribed only with clear indications and deprescribed as soon as possible

# References

- Watt JA, et al. Comparative Efficacy of Interventions for Aggressive and Agitated Behaviors in Dementia. *Annals of Internal Medicine* October 2019.
- Coupland CA, et al. Anticholinergic Drug Exposure and the Risk of Dementia A Nested Case-Control Study. *JAMA Internal Medicine* June 2019.