

VASCULAR DEMENTIA

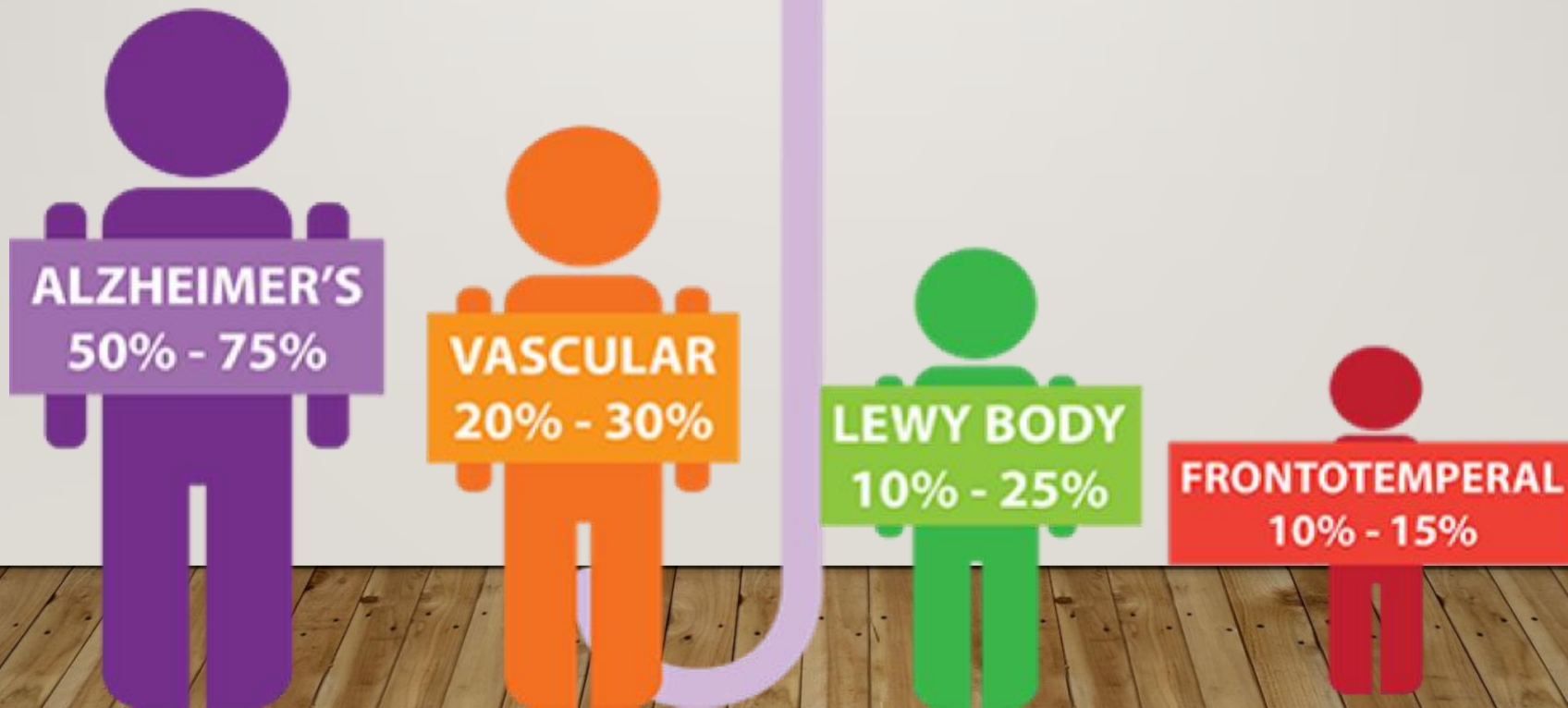
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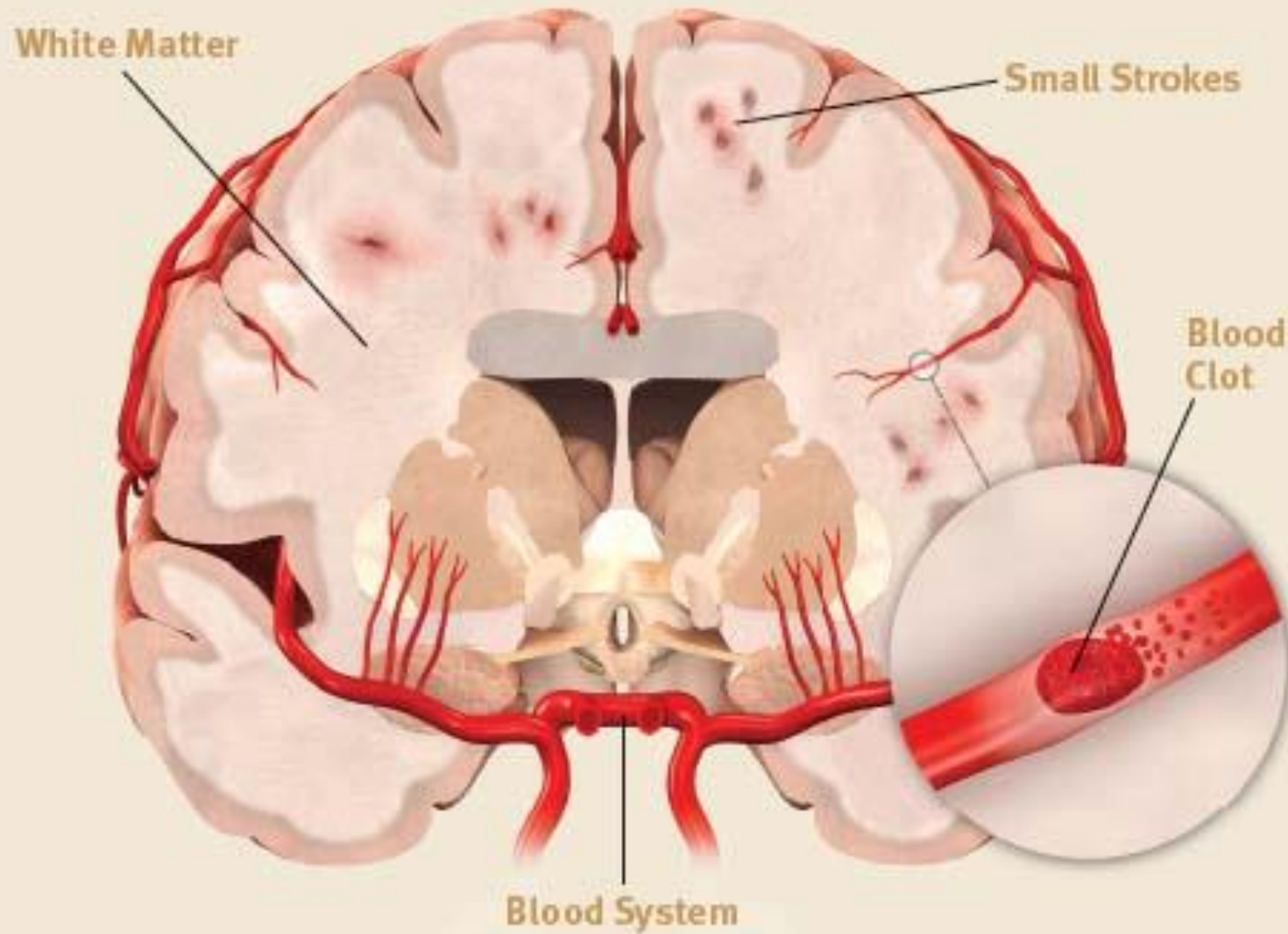
CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST

DEMENTIA

An "umbrella" term used to describe a range of symptoms associated with cognitive impairment.



VASCULAR DEMENTIA



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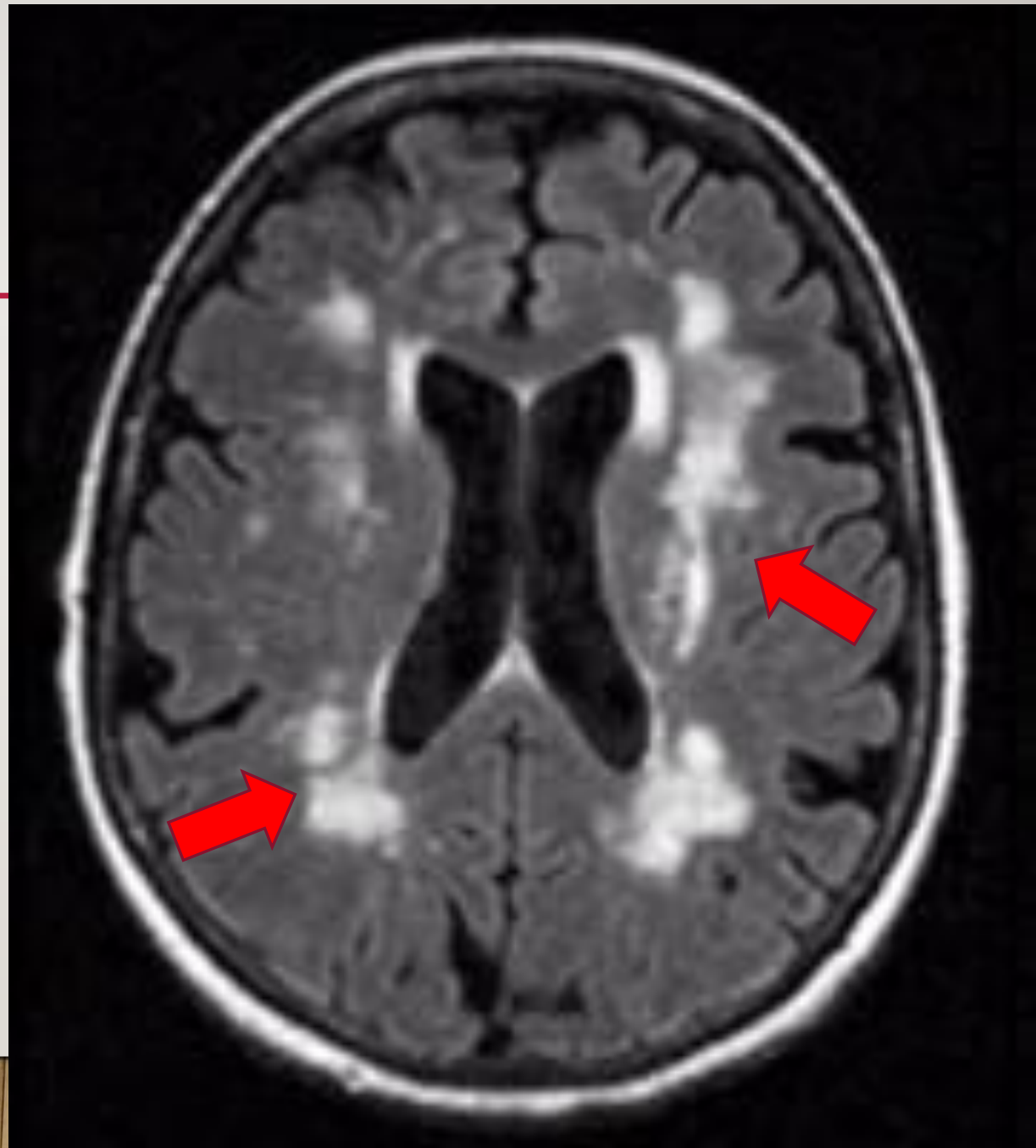
- Changes in thinking skills due to a problem with blood flow to the brain
 - Caused by stroke, mini strokes, and/or chronic vascular disease
- Affects daily activities (e.g., finances, medication management, driving)
- Can be sudden versus gradual
- Generally worsens over time, can look like a “step-wise progression”

COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

- Attention
- Processing speed
- Planning, organization, decision-making, problem-solving
- Aphasia
- Spatial neglect

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

- Paper-and-pencil tests and questionnaires
 - Examples: remember stories or list of words, name objects, copy pictures
- Look for patterns of strengths and weaknesses on test scores
- Diagnose and make treatment recommendations
- Repeat testing to track changes over time



OTHER SYMPTOMS

- Depression and/or anxiety
- Uncontrollable laughter or crying
- Changes in behavior or personality (e.g., apathy, impulsivity)
- Physical symptoms
 - Severe headache, trouble walking, trouble seeing, numbness or weakness on one side of the body

RISK FACTORS

- Age >60
- Untreated high blood pressure, cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes mellitus
- History of stroke
- Smoking
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Unhealthy diet

ACRONYM FOR STEPS IN CASE OF A STROKE

F - Facial drooping; ask the person to smile

A - Arm weakness; ask the person to raise both arms

S - Speech difficulty; ask the person to repeat a simple phrase

T - Time to call 911 immediately if you observe any of these signs

COGNITIVE COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES

- Maintain a structured routine
- Create a “memory station”
- Use memory aids (e.g., alerts or a large whiteboard)
- Ask people to speak slowly or repeat information in small chunks
- Remove distractions in your environment
- Slow down and add time to complete tasks
- Break down complex tasks and complete one “mini task” at a time

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Physical, occupational, and/or speech therapies
- Home safety assessment
- Driving evaluation
- Lifestyle modifications
- Talk to doctor about medication options
- Treat other symptoms (e.g., mood, sleep, pain)

FOR CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES

- Caregiver education
- Social support through other family, peers, community support groups
- Self-care (e.g., sleep, coping with stress)
- Supervision and respite care for caregiver burnout
- Living arrangement (e.g., assisted living or skilled nursing home placement)
- Seek guidance for financial and legal affairs (e.g., durable power of attorney, will)
- Enjoy the good times and engage in familiar activities

RESOURCES

More Information About Vascular Dementia

- [Alzheimer's Association](#)
- [UCSF - Memory & Aging](#)
- [National Stroke Association](#)

Vascular Online Support Groups and Resources

- [Family Caregiver Alliance](#)
 - <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/coping-strategies-for-vascular-dementia-caregivers>
 - [Alzheimer's Association - Caregiver Discussion Board](#)
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