

# Out of Hours

## *The Many Faces of Dementia:*

is an online course beneficial for GPs?

### **GAINING A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO DEMENTIA THROUGH THE STORIES, SYMPTOMS, AND SCIENCE BEHIND FOUR LESS COMMON DIAGNOSES**

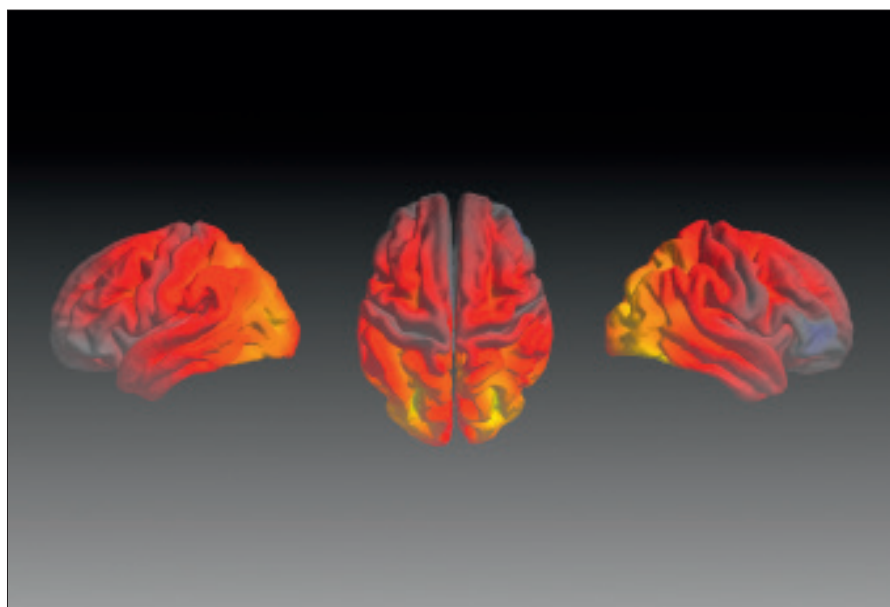
*The Many Faces of Dementia* is a free online course that provides a greater understanding of the presentation, symptoms, challenges, and current research in dementia. It is aimed at anyone with an interest in the subject. The focus of the course is on four rarer causes of dementia: familial Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, and posterior cortical atrophy.

The course uses a combination of videos from people with dementia, family carers, health professionals, and researchers, making it not only engaging and interesting, but also grounded in the real-life experiences of those living and working with patients with dementia on a daily basis. Supported by world-leading experts such as Prof. Nick Fox, it offers a rare opportunity to hear from those at the forefront of research and clinical practice.

### **IT'S NOT JUST A 'DEMENTIA' DIAGNOSIS**

Ultimately, we reviewed this course with the question, 'Is this course beneficial for a GP?' The course is time consuming, and GPs struggling during the current period of heavy workload may have more pressing demands. The four types of dementia presented in this course are relatively rare, and, despite more awareness needed within general practice, the number of cases a GP will see in their career is small and perhaps disproportionate to the length and detail of this course.

Despite this, there are some very important facets of information that a GP can take from this course. Particularly useful clinical information includes a deeper understanding of why it is important to make a more detailed diagnosis than simply 'dementia', and the



**Areas of the brain affected by posterior cortical atrophy, a less common form of dementia that is covered in the course. Licensed under CC BY 4.0 from The Many Faces of Dementia online course.**

particular medical and social challenges faced by patients with each condition are highlighted. It also provides an understanding of how the rarer forms of dementia present, reminding us that these may not be detected with routine screening memory tests, as memory can be relatively well preserved.

The course also steps away from the medical focus and encourages broader considerations including the needs of families. It creates a clear picture of some of the difficulties such families face and has helpful links contained throughout, which a GP can use to direct family members to for further support.

To conclude, this is a well-developed, interesting, and valuable course that, with some refinement and tailoring for a GP audience, could be a great educational resource.

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The course creator Tim Shakespeare won the 'Rising Star in Dementia Research Award' from the Alzheimer's Society in recognition of the course's potential impact on the world of care. He is now a Research Communications Officer at the Alzheimer's Society.

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?documentID=3330](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=3330)

To participate in this free online course visit:  
[www.futurelearn.com/courses/faces-of-dementia](http://www.futurelearn.com/courses/faces-of-dementia)

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