

# Clinical Pearls

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**Clinical Pearl 06/04/21**

**Each week we will aim to bring out a concise email that provides 4-5 key pieces of information addressing a specific issue in clinical therapeutics.**

**This week: Managing Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD) – Behavioural Therapies (Part 1 of 4)**

**Louise Johnston – Regional Manager**

## **What is medication reconciliation?**

Changes in behaviour and personality are common in people with dementia and can be challenging to manage. **Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)** is the official term for unsettled or responsive behaviours. Examples of responsive behaviours or BPSD include calling out, screaming, verbal aggression, physical aggression, hypersexuality, resistiveness, wandering, intrusiveness, repetitive behaviour, hoarding, nocturnal restlessness, emotionality, delusions, delusions, auditory/visual hallucinations.

In these circumstances it can be distressing for not only the person with dementia but also for their carers, and other residents in the home. Management of these behaviours is difficult as often the resident cannot articulate what their issues are.

Unless the person's behaviour puts themselves or another at immediate risk of harm, individualised non-pharmacological strategies should be trialled and documented prior to considering the use of pharmacological treatments.

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## Managing BPSD – Behavioural therapies

- The mainstay of treatment of BPSD is behavioural therapies. Together with changes to the environment these have been proven to be effective.
- Person centred strategies include redirection, massage, pet therapy and exercise.
- Secondary causes of BPSD include untreated pain, faecal impaction, untreated constipation, infections (esp. UTI) and delirium.
- Secondary causes of BPSD should be investigated and treated prior to considering pharmacological options.
- Non-pharmacological intervention should be trialled and recorded in your psychotropic register before considering pharmacological therapy.
- Dementia Training Australia have some excellent resources to help support staff in relation to the most appropriate non-pharmacological approach to treating certain behaviours ([www.dta.com.au](http://www.dta.com.au)).

### References:

Behavioural and psychological symptoms of Dementia. AMH Aged Care Companion (online). April 2019

Management of neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia. UpToDate (online). November 2019

Pharmacological management of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. Therapeutic Guidelines (online). March 2021

Please consider these issues when preparing or interpreting RMMR reports or education sessions. Contributions of content or suggested topics are welcome and should be sent directly to [natalie@wardmm.com.au](mailto:natalie@wardmm.com.au)