

## ETHICS IN DEMENTIA TREATMENT

F. Gerstenbrand<sup>1</sup>, H. Baumgartner<sup>2</sup>, W. Struhal<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Restorative Neurology and Neuromodulation,  
Vienna Austria,*

<sup>2</sup>*Research Ethics Committee, Innsbruck Austria*

As we know, dementia has different roots. Lately there is an increasing tendency to realize that not every patient with symptoms of dementia suffers from Alzheimer disease. In the very last time free to the intention that every patient with symptoms of dementia is an Alzheimer disease, the vascular dementia finds back to its right place. Mixed dementia (Korczyn) is an incoming diagnostic decision.

Drug treatment of dementia remains a problem. Different drugs against Alzheimer disease are used without impressive success. A new treatment trend for so-called "hypertension-vascular dementia" is spreading. Supported by cardiology various medications against hypertension are used for blood pressure higher than 120 to 80 mm HG independent of the age of a patient, because increased blood pressure leads to stroke and dementia. But it is evident, that a number of patients with a long low blood pressure are developing vascular dementia or stroke

Another ethical problem in dementia is the uncertainty of the diagnoses of Alzheimer's disease. Many patients being informed to suffer of this incurable illness react with a shock, a depression is the frequent consequence. Some of the patients develop suicidal ideas. The patients, relatives as well as the responsible doctors are responding with a therapeutical nihilism as a consequence of knowing the diagnosis. On the other hand better therapeutical results can be achieved in vascular-dementia or dementia caused by intoxication, after brain trauma etc. With special treatment programs a prolongation of life with good quality is possible in non Alzheimer dementia.

Important ethical problems for all forms of dementia are the decision about the right point in time using for the transferring the patient to a nursing home and the reduction of therapeutical program using expensive drugs.

The discussion about end of life decision in patients with Alzheimer disease and other severe state of dementia is controversial. "Passive euthanasia" is illegal in most European countries, only renunciation of maximal therapy is accepted.



**HELLENIC SOCIETY FOR AMELIORATION  
OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR CHRONIC NEUROLOGIC PATIENTS  
THESSALONIKI 2000,GREECE**

**3rd International Congress on the  
Improvement of the Quality of Life  
on Dementia, Epilepsy and MS**

**FINAL PROGRAM  
&  
ABSTRACT BOOK**

**28 - 31/1 2005, Alexandria - Egypt, Hotel  
Palestine**

**Congress Secretariat:**

**FORUM**

**International Congress Organizers  
24 Mitropoleos str, GR 54624 Thessaloniki Hellas  
Tel: +30 2310257128, +30 2310243588 Fax:+30 2310231849  
[www.forumcongress.com](http://www.forumcongress.com) [info@forumcongress.com](mailto:info@forumcongress.com)**