

PENN MEDICINE CREATES AN *EMERGENCY ROOM EXPERIENCE* FIT FOR ALL AGES

Pennsylvania Hospital's (PAH) Emergency Department (ED) recently earned the American College of Emergency Physicians' Bronze Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation following their great progress integrating new practices to meet the needs of older adults. "About 20 percent of the patients who come through the ED are over 65. We want them and their families to know we're going to go the extra mile for them," said Kevin M. Baumlin, MD, chair and medical director of Emergency Medicine at PAH.

As part of this initiative, social workers review the case of every older adult seeking care at PAH during their stay and afterwards to assist with additional services needed to succeed at home. The ED team also provides assist devices, conducts cognitive and functional assessments, and is working to create a more age-friendly space including clocks with large numbers for those who are visually impaired, as well as natural light to help reduce sundowning among those with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

LINKED TO DEMENTIA?

HEAD INJURY

YES

Recent research from Penn Medicine looked at the association between head injury and dementia. According to the findings, even just one injury was associated with increased risk of dementia later in life, with the risk rising further if more than one head injury was sustained.

"While head injury is not the only risk factor for dementia, it is one risk factor for dementia that is modifiable by behavior changes such as wearing helmets and seat belts."

- Dr. Schneider

Lead investigator, Andrea L.C. Schneider, MD, PhD, an assistant professor of Neurology at Penn, and her team looked at previously collected data and "the findings also suggest stronger associations of head injury with risk of dementia among women compared to among men and among white as compared to among Black populations," according to the Penn Medicine News Release.

ANESTHESIA

NO

In contrast, an unrelated Penn Medicine research study looked at another possible risk factor for dementia — anesthesia — but did not find a link.

This study, conducted by Penn Memory Center Co-director, David Wolk, MD, in collaboration with others in the Perelman School of Medicine and the Wharton School, observed elderly patients who were administered anesthesia and followed from five to fifteen years post-operation.

"Prior work suggested that anesthesia may play a role in promoting or accelerating Alzheimer's disease. There is also some thinking that surgery itself also may have negative effects on cognition," said Dr. Wolk in a recent Penn Memory Center feature.

"This study specifically examines this issue, at least in presumably cognitively normal older adults, and what their risk of developing dementia after a surgical event is."

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

NIA's *New Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Website*

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) recently launched a new website to connect patients, loved ones, and healthcare professionals with the many federal resources available to them.

Resources include:

- Signs and Symptoms of different forms of Dementia
- Clinical trial information and research opportunities
- Caregiver information & tips
- ADRD related news and events

To learn more, visit:
Alzheimers.gov