**The LBD Spectrum Learn More About LBD From Lewy Body Dementia Association (lbda.org)**

Lewy body dementia (LBD) is a brain disease characterized by a spectrum of symptoms involving disturbances of movement, cognition, behavior, sleep and autonomic function. Two related clinical disorders make up the LBD spectrum: dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) and Parkinson’s disease dementia (PDD). Individuals with DLB present with dementia as the early disabling symptom, plus other LBD symptoms, one of which may be parkinsonism. Others will present with motor symptoms resulting in a diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease (PD) and may also have some mild cognitive impairment initially or in the early stages of the disease; over time, usually several years or more, some will progress to dementia (PDD). Did you know? LBD affects an estimated 1.4 million Americans. LBD is often misdiagnosed as a psychiatric disorder or another form of dementia.

Dementia with Lewy Bodies

DLB is the second most common form of degenerative dementia in the elderly next to Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Recent estimates suggest that DLB represents 4 to 16% of cases of dementia seen in the clinic,1 but the true prevalence is probably higher.2 The most common features of DLB are progressive cognitive impairment leading eventually to full-blown dementia, parkinsonian motor symptoms (tremor, slowed mobility, stiffness of muscles, stooped posture, shuffling gait), visual hallucinations, and fluctuations in levels of alertness and cognitive acuity. Other symptoms include acting out dreams (REM sleep behavior disorder) and disturbances of autonomic function (low blood pressure, constipation and urinary frequency).3 Severe sensitivity or over-reaction to antipsychotic drugs (aka neuroleptics) are also common. DLB is often misdiagnosed as AD, especially in those individuals who have few, if any signs of motor parkinsonism.4 Diagnosis is challenging because the order of symptom appearance, their relative severity and the combination of features present varies among individuals.5