## ON DEATH AND DYING

#### DR. LAURA MATOS AFA/CDCGS Texas State Council On AD And Related Disorders, Austin 2007

# WHAT IS DEATH?

- SCIENTIFICALLY
- SPIRITUALLY
- SOCIALLY
- IT IS A MYSTERY, that historically, since the beginning of the humanity all inhabitants have tried to understand and disclose.

# WHAT IS DEATH?

 All definitions are appropriate since they are based on the pre-determinant factors

# AND FOR YOU, WHAT IS IT?

# WHAT IS NOT?

- It is not a failure
- Should not be feared
- Our own mortality comes guarantee the minute we are alive
- DYING IS A NATURAL ACT

## Terminally III

 Medical Science has determined terminally ill patient as those patients that are suffering for an illness that gives them not more than 6 months of life.

# WHAT'S IMPORTANT AT THE DYING MOMENT?

- It varies from culture to culture
- From family to family
- For religious creed to creed

• IT IS BY ALL MEANS A MOMENT OF THE MOST INTIMATE RECONCILIATION WITH THE GOD WE BELIEVE AND THE PEOPLE WE LOVE

#### WHAT A DYING PERSON NEEDS?

- The respect to His/Her Terminally III, Universal Rights
  - Preservation of their human rights until the last minute
  - Respect of His/Her decisions
  - Dynamic participation in the last minute decisions if possible.
  - Maximum Physical Comfort

# WHAT A DYING PERSON NEEDS?

- -Maximum Pain Control
- -Constant company (fear to loneliness)
- -Fulfillment of the spiritual needs
- -Fulfillment of his/her social needs
- -Fulfillment of his/her personal realization needs
- -Satisfaction of the emotional needs

## WHAT A DYING PERSON NEEDS?

- They need constant validation
- Not worries or concerns for unfinished business
- Tranquility
- Peaceful environment
- Need of feeling unconditional love
- Personal interactions in spite of physical limitations

#### Good Death

- The patient has full acknowledgement of His/Her circumstance and accepts destiny
- No Physical pain
- Time for making peace with the loved ones
- Time for spiritual intimate reconciliation
- Medical Assistance
- Spiritual Assistance

#### Not a Good Death

- The one that lacks all the human needs fulfilled
- Characterized by physical suffering, loneliness null time for preparation and goodbye
- Sudden Death
- Suicide
- Accidental Death
- Crime Death

- RETROGENESIS AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE A.D. PATIENTS IN SEVERE STAGE OF A.D. HAS PROVEN THEIR CAPACITY OF THINKING IS PRESERVED (Dr. Auer 1994)
- Therefore the common statements made in front of any AD patient about "does not recognize me, does not understand what we said" are false and hurtful

- Retrogenesis (Reinberg 2002) it's the process by which the degenerative process of the organism follows the reverse order by which they were acquired
- Comparing the developmental scales in children with the deterioration rates in the AD patients this theory has established a clear co-relation between development stage and deterioration of functions

- Caregivers assume the Ad patients DO NOT HAVE any of the above mentioned needs limiting with this assumption their LIFE'S QUALITY.
- Our AD patients feel, have intact emotions and thinking process.
- They cannot express their needs and caregivers are limited to fill it.

- Using the retrogenesis theory, we certainly can make a world of difference in providing the AD patients in all stages of the disease the satisfaction of all his needs.
- Our dying AD patient needs more of us than anyone else.

### FINAL MOMENTS

- It will vary greatly according to the cause of death, the person's general health, medications and any other significant factors
- It can last from 12 hours up to 72 hours
- In general we see:
- Less physical activity, communication and interest in the surroundings.

## FINAL MOMENTS

- Changes body in temperature and Blood pressure
- Less interest in food or water
- Verbalizations decrease( not spontaneous speaking) but still communicates with body language or metaphorically
- Coma

#### APPROACHING MOMENTS

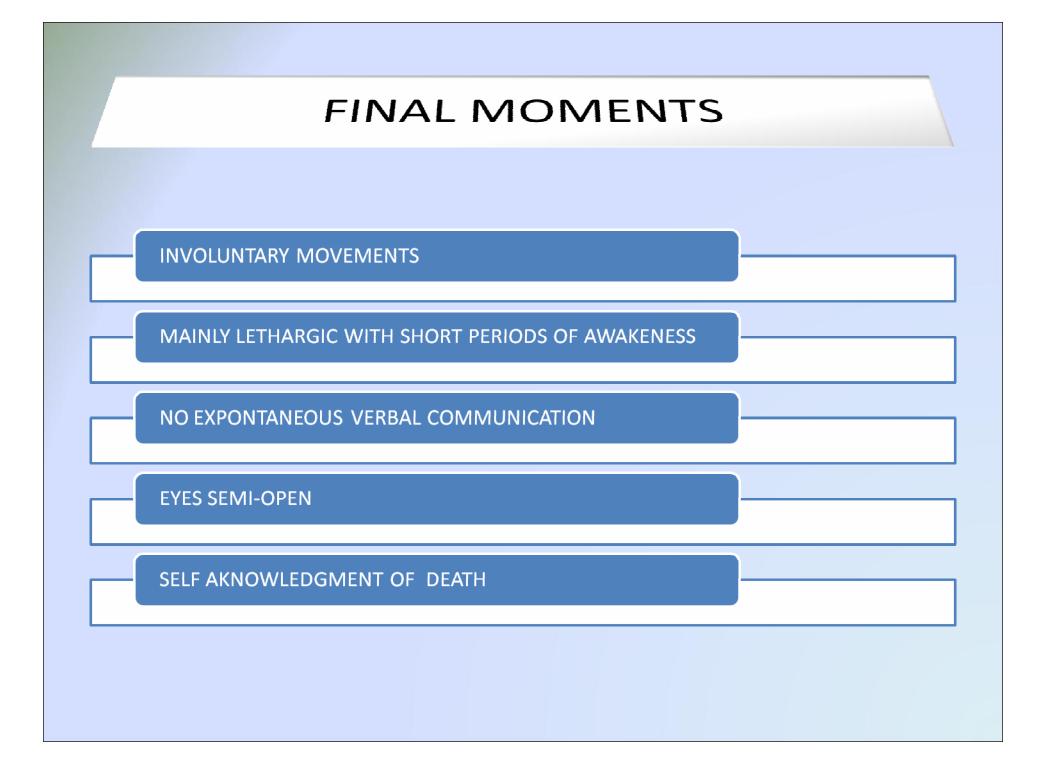
#### Difficult In Swallowing Saliva

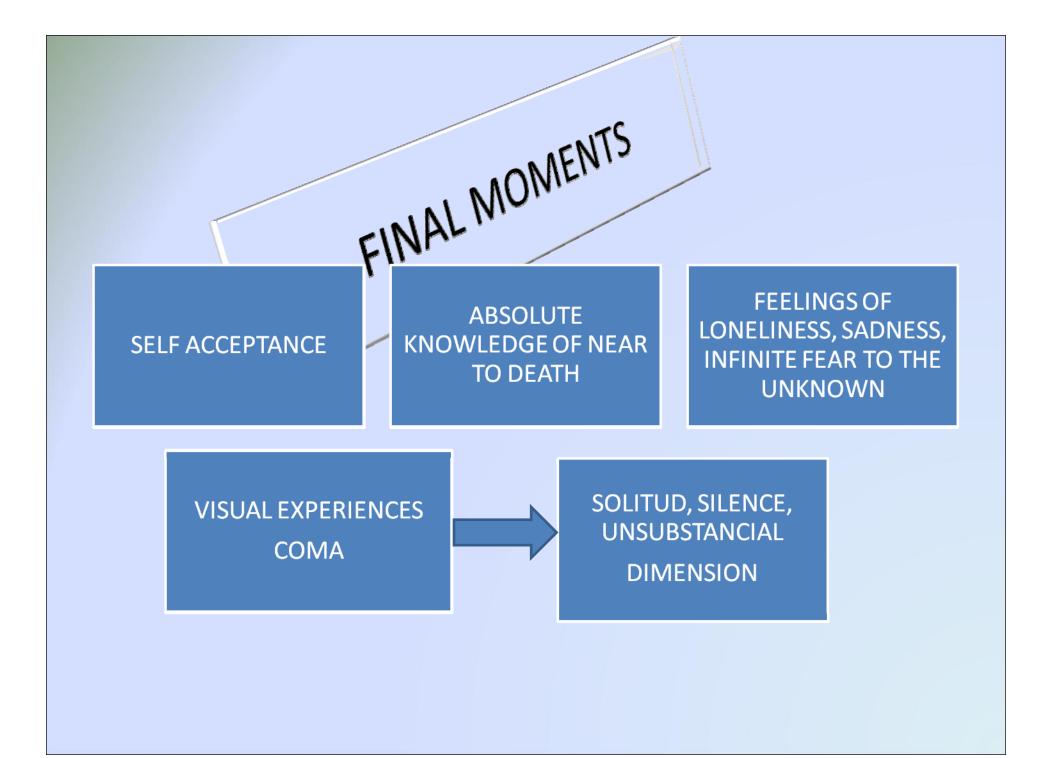
#### Changes in Body Temperature

RESPIRATORY CHANGES RAPID AIR EXCHANGE WITH EPISODES OF SLOW AND/OR NO BREATHING

Secretions Accumulates in Lungs; whishing, roughed, etc PERIODS OF NOT BREATHING(Cheyne-Stokes) Skin Color changes; starting in the feet and ascending

Episodes of cold and hot sweating





## GRIEF

 Elizabeth Kubler- Ross developed a model of grieve. On her life long experience caring for chronic terminally ill patients she corroborated these patients go through all the stages and how to guide the families and caregivers to understand them and to live them in a more benevolent manner

# **GRIEF STAGES**

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

- Grief in unlike any other life experience
- It is an engulfing , overpowering self consuming experience
- Usually we become overprotective of our beloved ones
- Over worry y about either simple or tragic imaginary events

- Caregiver becomes disorganized, unfocussed and the attention wanders.
- Disbelief, AD caregivers experience disbelief in a very low percent, we all suffer disbelief several times during the illness process. During this period of time, the person experiences numbness and disassociation of the real world (it seems like a bad dream)

- Denial, the AD caregivers denial is somehow different, since we had gone through this several times, the denial after the death is more a re-remembering of previous denials.
- Rage and Anger are NORMAL EXPERIENCES
- Guilt or Regrets they are different, yet very dangerous and the end result of them is the total de-socialization and isolation of the grieving person

- Guilt, is what you believe when you have done something wrong knowlingly
- Regret, is what you wish you had done or said
- Depression, can last for minutes to years, it presents very different and caregivers need to know how to identify it.

- Fears
- Panic
- Physical Illness
- Continuous Reminders (holidays etc.)
- Dreams, nightmares or "visions" RESOLUTION, PEACE AND COMFORT

# THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED TO THE AUTHOR, NOT PARTIAL OR TOTAL REPRODUCTION IS PERMITTED DR. LAURA MATOS <u>matos@rgv.rr.com</u>