

New service offers hope for people worried about their memory

Submitted by: Word Worker

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A ground-breaking online service has been launched to help people with memory problems, offering not just assessment and diagnosis, but treatment and dementia prevention.

MemoryClinix connects patients with leading psychiatrists who conduct their assessment over video link, where the patient is also invited to take a cognitive test.

It is believed to be the first memory clinic to also offer dementia prevention.

Following any required CT head scan and dementia blood screening, patients meet their psychiatrist online again for their results and diagnosis, and where they also receive a personalised care plan adapted to their needs.

The clinical lead for MemoryClinix is Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Liana Borza, who heads up a team of psychiatrists specialising in dementia and memory issues. Dr Borza is also a clinical teacher at the Centre for Psychiatry at Imperial College London.

Dr Borza believes MemoryClinix differs from other UK dementia care services, by offering a prevention service and aftercare to people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI).

“What happens in a standard cognitive impairment and dementia service is, after assessment, if a patient is diagnosed with dementia, then a care plan is formulated. However, if they have MCI, they are sent back to primary care with no intervention,” said Dr Borza.

“The goal of MemoryClinix is to help people live well with dementia and live well with MCI, but also to reduce their lifestyle-related dementia risk factors. We are also offering our support to the family carers of people with dementia, so they can also have a good quality of life.”

Public Health England has committed to reducing the incidence of dementia, which currently costs the UK around £26.3 billion annually, according to Alzheimer’s Society – higher than the cost of cancer, heart disease, or stroke.

In the UK, more than one million people could have dementia by 2025. By 2050, this figure is predicted to exceed two million.

Reducing the risk of dementia not only saves money for the health and social care system, it helps people to live longer, healthier lives.

Government reports say around 40% of dementia cases may be attributable to potentially modifiable risk factors, which include stress, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, high blood pressure, poor diet and high cholesterol. A 20% reduction in risk factors per decade could reduce UK prevalence by 16.2% (300,000 cases) by 2050.

MemoryClinix is a service operated by Psychiatry-UK, which itself is a partnership run by GMC registered specialist doctors working in both the NHS and the private sector. Psychiatry-UK provides services to the NHS and is regulated by the CQC.

Through MemoryClinix's interventions and aftercare, people will be helped to modify their lifestyle-related risk factors, and so will be referred to a multidisciplinary team of specialists who collaborate with Psychiatry-UK, and who can advise on areas such as stress, nutrition, physical exercise and smoking.

Patients who are diagnosed with dementia will also be offered pharmacological treatment, such as medication, but also non-pharmacological interventions, such as cognitive stimulation therapy (which can be delivered online) and occupational therapy (delivered locally, to the patient) where appropriate.

NHS data shows the number of people who were assessed for dementia fell to less than half the level before the pandemic – 10,535 in February 2021 compared to 23,392 in February 2020. In that time, the number of people receiving an initial memory assessment fell by two-thirds, while the number of referrals to memory clinics – which help diagnose dementia – fell by 42%.

Dr Borza added: "By offering our service online, we can see more people, as there will be no commute time and no waiting lists. Patients will also feel less anxious if they are not being seen in a hospital setting, and this can have a positive impact on their performance at cognitive testing."

For more information about MemoryClinix, visit <https://www.memoryclinix.co.uk/>. For information about Psychiatry-UK, visit <https://psychiatry-uk.com/>.

Editor's notes

MemoryClinix is a service provided by Psychiatry-UK, which offers one-to-one online consultations with GMC registered specialist doctors who work in both the NHS and the private sector.

MemoryClinix is run by Clinical Lead Dr Liana Borza with a team of experienced psychiatrists specialising in dementia and memory loss.

Dr Borza has worked in various memory clinic settings within the NHS and has a PhD in Alzheimer's Disease with New York University School of Medicine, under joint supervision with the world renowned Professor Barry Reisberg.

She is registered with the GMC and is an International Associate with the Royal College of Psychiatrists. She is also a clinical teacher at Imperial College London, and has been invited to deliver keynote speeches at the Alzheimer's Show Digital Hub webinar series, organised in partnership with Dementia UK and Alzheimer's Society.

Psychiatry-UK is an LLP (limited liability partnership). Psychiatry-UK runs in a similar way to a barristers' chambers, connecting patients with qualified psychiatrists, who conduct all their consultations via video link. It is owned and run by the members as a designated General Medical Council organisation.

Adult ADHD patients, whose GPs are based in England, can be referred directly via their GP or, under Right to Choose, elect to use the services of Psychiatry-UK following a referral by their GP.

Patients, wherever they are based and with a wide variety of mental health conditions, can self-refer as private clients.

Because consultations take place online, waiting times are typically lower than waiting to see a psychiatrist in a face-to-face medical setting.

Psychiatry-UK currently has more than 40,000 patients, of whom 30,000 have been referred since the start of the pandemic. They are being supported by more than 150 psychiatrists and clinicians.

All the psychiatrists at Psychiatry-UK are highly qualified. To join, they must have held a substantive NHS consultant post, be on the specialist register at the GMC and be in good standing with the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Their expertise covers a wide range of conditions, including ADHD, depression, OCD, bipolar disorder, anxiety, autism, eating disorders and addiction.

For more information about MemoryClinix visit <https://www.memoryclinix.co.uk/>. For information about Psychiatry-UK, visit <https://psychiatry-uk.com/>. For media enquiries, contact Jo Smyth on 07780 639287 or email jo.smyth@psychiatry-uk.com.