

Table 3

Differential diagnosis of depression and dementia (modified from www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/depression-in-older-adults-and-the-elderly.htm)

Dementia (especially Alzheimer's disease)	Major depression
Gradual mental decline	Rapid mental decline
Presented by relatives or professionals	Self-referred
Lack of insight (does not notice memory problems or does not seem to care: 'I remember the things I want to remember')	Notices or worries about memory problems ('I think I am losing my mind')
Can be confused and disoriented in time and place	Usually oriented in time and place
Impairment of episodic memory ● Impaired free recall ● Impaired total recall (cueing does not improve recall due to inability to store new information) ● Flat learning curve despite repeated exposure	Impaired concentration, results in impaired encoding ● Recall improves with repeated exposure ● Normal recall, if encoding is controlled
Writing, speaking and motor skills can be impaired	Language and motor performance are typically slowed