

**POSSIBLE MEANINGS OF BEHAVIORS SUGGESTED BY STUDY DATA**

Behavior	Possible Meaning of Behavior	Suggested Interventions
<p><b>Verbal agitation</b></p>	<p>-occurred most often when the resident was alone</p> <p>-in his/her own room, in the evening or night</p> <p><i>-it may be a response to loneliness or fears</i></p>	<p>-giving a snack</p> <p>-playing favorite music by tape or on the radio</p> <p>-arranging for family or volunteer visits at predictable times of agitation</p>
<p><b>Aggressive behaviors</b></p>	<p>-occurred more frequently in social situations</p> <p>-at night when cold</p> <p>-when the resident was in personal physical contact with staff during basic ADL's</p> <p>-in the evening</p> <p>-they were more often directed at, or triggered by, staff members who tended to react to the behavior</p> <p>-they may be a response to real or perceived unpleasant stimuli</p> <p>-or an uncomfortable environment; which is either triggered by or enabled by the presence of others</p> <p><i>-they may sometimes be an attempt by the resident to interact</i></p>	<p>-establish a soothing routine that can be used by all caregivers when carrying out the ADL that triggers an agitated reaction in the resident</p> <p>- assess the resident's preferences for environmental influences such as heat and cold and plan approaches to accommodate these needs</p>
<p><b>Requests for attention</b></p>	<p>-were more likely to occur when others were around</p> <p>-with a female rather than a male visitor</p> <p>-in an unpleasant environment</p> <p>-seem to have an interactive quality</p> <p><i>-seems sometimes to be a plea for help from uncomfortable physical, and/or psychological conditions; although this was not supported by the data</i></p>	<p>-change of position or place</p> <p>-care team compiles a list of planned activities enjoyed by the resident that can be used when staff attention is requested frequently after care needs have been satisfied</p>
<p><b>Pacing/Wandering</b></p>	<p>-occurred most frequently around others</p> <p>-occurs under positive physical conditions</p> <p>-tended to decrease during cold nights</p>	<p>-help the resident establish a safe wandering path which is interesting to the resident</p> <p>-encourage staff to greet resident often</p>

	<p>-did not seem to be associated with discomfort and showed patterns opposite to the other behaviors</p> <p>-increases with higher staffing which may have improved the atmosphere on the unit</p> <p><i>-pacing may have a different meaning than other behaviors</i></p>	<p>in his path, and respond to any requests for help promptly</p> <p>-encourage staff to look on pacing as a coping behavior that can be channeled into an acceptable means of meeting the resident's needs</p>
<b>Repetitious mannerisms, strange movement</b>	<p>-picking at things increased when the resident was alone and doing nothing</p> <p><i>-may be related to boredom and a need for stimulation</i></p>	<p>-ask family and primary caregivers about the resident's favorite activities and soothing techniques that might be planned for times when the resident reacts with these behaviors</p>
<b>Increased agitation on holidays</b>	<p><i>-may be due to decreased staffing levels, or sadness and frustration over some lingering memories and expectations of holidays</i></p>	<p>-provide separate holiday activities with less stimulation and people, for residents who become agitated on the holidays (Obtain input from family and primary caregivers about favorite holiday customs observed by the resident)</p>

Information from this study may be used to motivate staff to look at ways to improve care for agitated residents with dementia.

The study found that agitated behaviors varied greatly from resident to resident and in the same resident at different times. Residents with dementia who could not respond in a coherent way displayed *the same need for social contact and appropriate stimulation* through their agitated behavior as non-demented persons do. However, non-demented people make their needs known in "more socially acceptable" ways.