



# What is Agitation in Alzheimer's Dementia (AAD)?

Agitation in Alzheimer's Dementia is a frequent manifestation of Alzheimer's dementia (AD) that affects approximately half of people living with AD.<sup>1</sup> The International Psychiatric Association (IPA) defines AAD as the manifestation of disruptive behaviors like those listed below.<sup>2</sup> An underlying cause of AAD may be due to dysfunction in **norepinephrine**, **serotonin**, and **dopamine** (NSD) neurotransmitter systems.<sup>3,4</sup>

## Verbally Aggressive



- Screaming
- Yelling
- Speaking in an excessively loud voice
- Using profanity
- Shouting

## Physically Aggressive



- Grabbing
- Shoving
- Pushing
- Resisting
- Hitting others
- Kicking objects or people
- Scratching
- Biting
- Throwing objects
- Hitting self
- Slamming doors
- Tearing things
- Destroying property

## Excessive Motor Activity



- Pacing
- Rocking
- Gesturing
- Pointing fingers
- Restlessness
- Performing repetitious mannerisms

For more information on a hypothetical pathophysiology of AAD, please visit [AADImbalance.com](http://AADImbalance.com).

**References:** 1. Halpern R, Seare J, Tong J, Hartry A, Olaoye A, Aigbogun MS. Using electronic health records to estimate the prevalence of agitation in Alzheimer disease/dementia. *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry*. 2019;34(3):420-431. 2. Cummings J, Mintzer J, Brodaty H, et al. Agitation in cognitive disorders: International Psychogeriatric Association provisional consensus clinical and research definition. *Int Psychogeriatr*. 2015;27(1):7-17. 3. Rosenberg PB, Nowrangi MA, Lyketsos CG. Neuropsychiatric symptoms in Alzheimer's disease: What might be associated brain circuits? *Mol Aspects Med*. 2015;43-44:25-37. 4. Wright CI, Dickerson BC, Feczko E, Negeira A, Williams D. A functional magnetic resonance imaging study of amygdala responses to human faces in aging and mild Alzheimer's disease. *Biol Psychiatry*. 2007;62(12):1388-1395.