

Dementia with Lewy Bodies: Clinical Features, Neurobiology, Diagnostic Advances, and Management Challenges

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Abstract

Dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) is a common yet frequently underdiagnosed neurodegenerative dementia characterized by a constellation of cognitive, neuropsychiatric, motor, sleep, and autonomic features. It occupies a central position within the spectrum of synucleinopathies and shares overlapping clinical and pathological features with Alzheimer's disease (AD) and Parkinson's disease dementia (PDD). Core clinical features include fluctuating cognition, recurrent well-formed visual hallucinations, spontaneous Parkinsonism, and rapid eye movement sleep behaviour disorder (RBD), with supportive features such as autonomic dysfunction and severe sensitivity to antipsychotics. Advances in neuroimaging, particularly dopamine transporter imaging, fluorodeoxyglucose positron emission tomography, and cardiac metaiodobenzylguanidine scintigraphy, have significantly improved diagnostic accuracy. However, management remains challenging due to the narrow therapeutic window between cognitive, psychiatric, and motor symptoms, and the heightened vulnerability of patients to adverse drug effects. This narrative review synthesizes current evidence on the clinical features, neurobiology, diagnostic approaches, and management challenges of DLB, highlighting recent developments in biomarkers and emphasizing the need for individualized, multidisciplinary care strategies.

Key words:

neurodegenerative dementia, Lewy bodies, cognitive, neuropsychiatric, motor, sleep, and autonomic features,