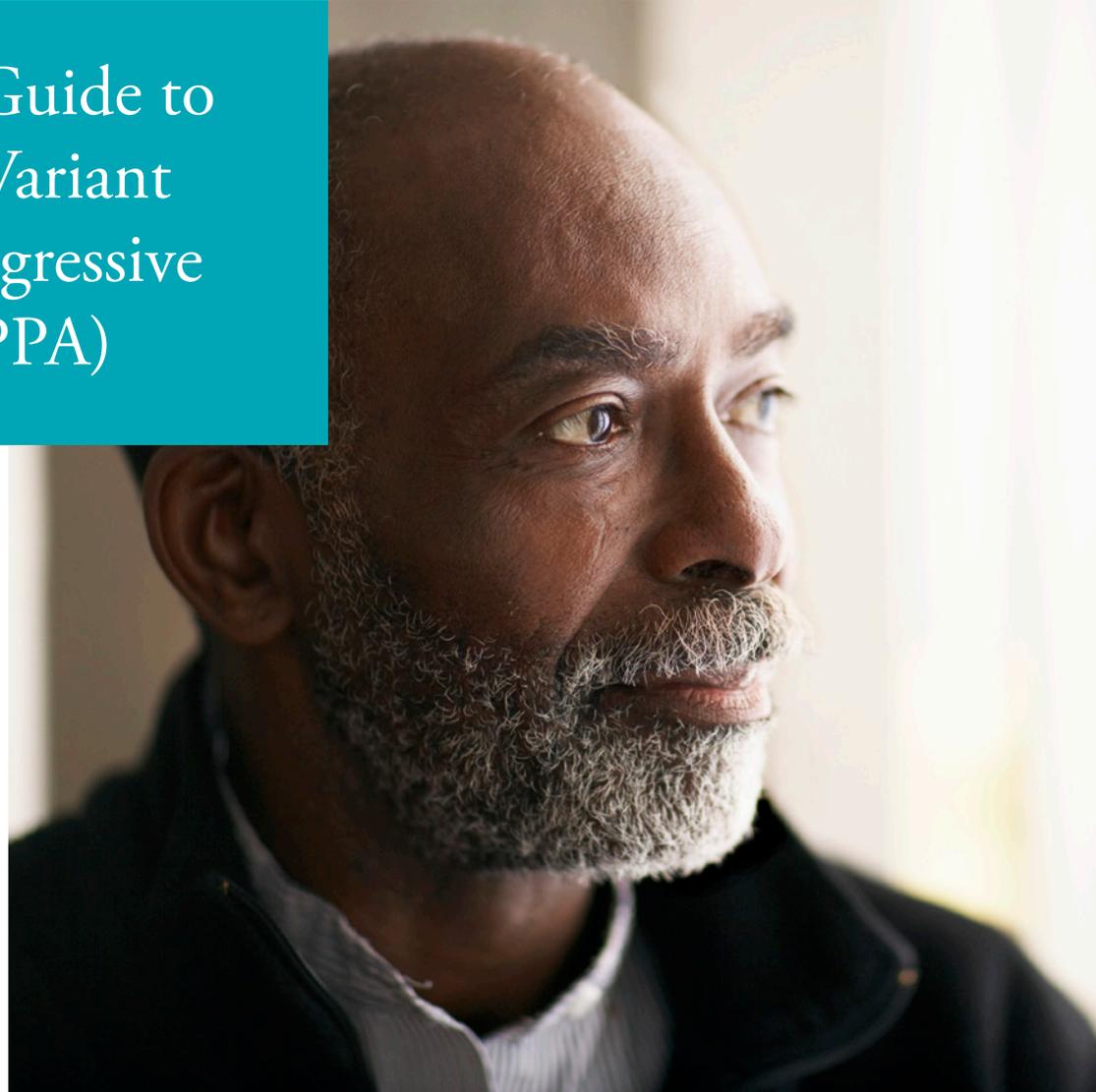


A Patient's Guide to Logopenic Variant Primary Progressive Aphasia (lvPPA)

This material is provided
by UCSF Weill Institute
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an educational resource
for patients.



UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences
Memory and Aging Center



What is logopenic variant primary progressive aphasia?

Primary progressive aphasia (PPA) is a condition that slowly damages the parts of the brain that control speech and language. People with PPA usually have difficulty speaking, naming objects or understanding conversations.

One form of PPA is called the logopenic variant (lvPPA), and those with lvPPA have increasing trouble thinking of the words they want to say. As time goes on, people with lvPPA have more trouble getting the words out, and they eventually begin to speak slower and slower.

What causes lvPPA?

The cause of lvPPA is unknown. Scientists know that in lvPPA there is a large build-up of proteins called amyloid and tau within brain cells, which are the same proteins that build up in Alzheimer's disease. These proteins occur normally, but we do not yet understand why they build up in large amounts. As more and more proteins form in brain cells, the cells lose their ability to function and eventually die. This causes the affected parts of the brain to shrink.

How is age related to lvPPA?

Most people with lvPPA start to have symptoms in their 50s, although some people have shown signs earlier or later.

What happens in lvPPA?

People with lvPPA gradually have more trouble finding the words they want to use. For example, they may often pause to find the right word. They may develop problems with working memory, and as a result, they might have increasing difficulty repeating sentences and phrases, or following instructions when they are long. They may also begin to have some trouble naming people and objects.

Later in the disease, people with lvPPA may have such difficulty finding words that they might stop speaking completely. Difficulties

with memory may develop or get worse, and reading and writing may become harder. Sometimes, later symptoms of lvPPA include getting lost or having trouble recognizing people.

A person with lvPPA can live many years with the disease, although this can vary from person to person.

Are there medicines to treat lvPPA?

Though there is no cure for lvPPA yet, there are medications that may help manage the symptoms. These medications are called cholinesterase inhibitors. Cholinesterase inhibitors may help if a person with lvPPA has trouble with speech or memory, especially if the memory problems are similar to those seen in patients with Alzheimer's disease.

What other things help?

There are various ways to help a person with lvPPA. Speech therapy may help improve communication between people with lvPPA and others.

Research has shown that physical exercise helps to enhance brain health and improves mood and general fitness. A balanced diet, enough sleep, and limited alcohol intake are other important ways to promote good brain health. Other illnesses that affect the brain, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, should also be treated if present.

Resources

National Aphasia Association: aphasia.org

Faces of Aphasia: facesofaphasia.com

Aphasia Hope Foundation: aphasiahope.org

Family Caregiver Alliance: caregiver.org

National Institutes of Health: nih.gov

Research: clinicaltrials.gov