

MSN-prepared nurses are uniquely positioned to lead holistic nursing care across a variety of healthcare delivery contexts. Reflect upon the learning that has occurred in Week Eight, and respond to the following:

- Describe a scenario involving an individual with complex health concerns. Include the physical, psychosocial, cultural, economic, educational, and environmental factors that influence the health status of the individual in the scenario.
- Where is the individual on the health continuum, and why?
- How might the MSN-prepared nurse support positive health outcomes through a holistic approach and expanded competency with advanced assessment, pathophysiology and pharmacology?
- Looking ahead, how will competency in advanced health assessment, pathophysiology, and pharmacology will be especially useful to your practice?

An 89-year-old female patient, AA, is admitted to the dementia unit in a long-term care facility after a three-day hospital stay for evaluation of a fall that happened in her home resulting in a laceration to her forehead and a sprained wrist. AA's family reports that she has been growing increasingly confused over the last three weeks, but they attributed it to recurrent urinary tract infections. AA has a seven-year history of dementia that appears to be progressing from moderate to severe.

Upon admission, AA is accompanied by her two daughters who are visibly upset and voice feelings of sadness stating, "We promised Mom that we would never put her in a home, but it is just getting to be too much. It is unsafe for her to be living alone, but neither of us have the time to give her the care she needs." They also state that they have waiting to have her placed in a home due to lack of insurance and resources to afford it.

In her current state, AA is fluctuating through stages of the treatment paradigm. While she is not currently experiencing any disabling signs or symptoms from dementia, she is noticeable deteriorating mentally which has slowly begun to affect her ability to care for herself and will result in declining health.

An MSN-prepared nurse in this scenario can support AA in achieving and maintaining positive health outcomes by first understanding the pathophysiology of dementia. While dementia does not follow a specific time progression, it is important for the MSN-prepared nurse to truly understand how it is affecting AA and her family. The MSN-prepared nurse will discover that AA is cooperative and wants to participate in her care but is also particular about how things are done. By learning how AA likes to be cared for, the MSN-prepared nurse can make her feel comfortable while caring for her and promoting independence by allowing her to participate in her cares. An understanding of pharmacology for this patient will help the MSN-prepared nurse to understand that while there are many medications to help slow the progression of dementia, the most important aspect of care for a person with dementia is to keep them safe and comfortable. A collective understanding of the disease progression and identified treatments (both pharmacological and non-pharmacological) will help the MSN-prepared nurse to better care for AA and to also help AA's family to understand the disease, cope with their feelings about their mother's diagnosis of dementia, and to actively participate in and understand her care.