

## Neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia-Forensic and ethical implications

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The assessment and management of neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia (NPS) can be challenging. Psychosis, agitation and aggression can pose serious risks to patients and others. Aggressive or sexually inappropriate behavior can have forensic consequences. Ethical dilemmas often arise when balancing safety versus freedom for impaired patients who become incapable of appreciating or respecting moral or legal boundaries. Clinicians often perceive a troublesome disconnect between evidence-based guidelines and the challenges of treating dangerous NPS. Using case illustrations, the concepts of risk, safety, freedom, dignity and personhood in dementia care will be discussed.

### Biography

Michael J. Passmore is a Geriatric Psychiatrist with clinical and research interests including neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia, delirium and bioethics. His clinical work is primarily in acute care with hospitalized patients suffering dementia-related psychiatric disturbances. He also provides consultation to long-term care and rehabilitation facilities. He has authored or co-authored 18 peer-reviewed publications and has served as an associate editor for the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* as well as the *Journal ISRN Geriatrics*. He has provided expert opinion and testimony in court regarding the forensic implications of neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia. He is a member of the clinical ethics committee at Providence Health Care in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

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