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An Academic Partner of Trinity College Dublin



TUH  
Memory  
Assessment  
and Support  
Service

# Primary Progressive Aphasia

## Factsheet

**Dementia is a group of symptoms which can affect memory, thinking and behaviour severely enough to interfere with daily life.**

Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is the most common type of dementia. Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning—thinking, remembering, and reasoning—and behavioural abilities to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities.

## **What is Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA)?**

PPA is a rare neurological syndrome in which language becomes slowly and progressively impaired. It is caused by diseases, such as Alzheimer's Disease or Frontotemporal dementia. Proteins change structure and build up having a toxic effect on brain cells, which then get damaged.

Aphasia is the inability or reduced ability to understand or produce speech and is caused by changes in the brain. There can also be problems with reading and writing. 'Primary' relates to the fact that language is the main feature. Symptoms begin gradually, often before the age of 65, depending on the area of the brain affected and worsen over time. Every person will have their own specific symptoms but there are three main types of PPA.

### **1. Semantic Variant PPA (SvPPA)**

- Speech is fluent for long stages; vocabulary is reduced
- Talking 'around' topics
- Losing knowledge of facts you already know, not from a specific moment in time
- Difficulty knowing what words mean
- Difficulty with naming - problem knowing categories
- Difficulty recognising objects
- Difficulty reading irregular words

### **2. Logopenic variant PPA (LvPPA) / Language variant of Alzheimer's Disease**

- Reduced short term memory for words
- Understand words but may mispronounce them /pick the wrong syllable
- Pause during speech
- Use 'jargon' more
- Spelling can be a challenge
- Difficulty reading long sentences

### **3. Progressive Non Fluent Aphasia (Pnfa)**

- Speech is not fluent & takes effort
- Can understand words and recognise objects but may have difficulty expressing speech
- Grammar is a challenge
- May reverse words
- May have difficulty using facial muscles

### **How can I manage my symptoms?**

We will link you with our specialist Speech & Language Therapist  
We will explain everything about the type of PPA you have and your supportive others. This will help you to understand your specific difficulties. - We will signpost you towards Assistive Technology which can be very helpful