

Which clinical situation is most consistent with dissociative amnesia?

- A. 67 yr old woman with reported long term declining memory. She has poor short term recall, but remembers testable historic facts.
- B. 48 yr old man says he lost his memory after he hit his head at work. He cannot recite name, address, date, serial 7's, or mother's name.
- C. 77 yr old male with sudden onset amnesia for last two hours. Remembers biographical information but is unable to retain new information.
- D. 34 yr old woman with a history of depression and anxiety. She does not remember her childhood during ages 9-13. She does well on cognitive testing.

Answer: D

- A slow decline in memory with poor short term recall and intact remote memory is likely dementia (a). The man who cannot get any questions correct has either very severe head trauma or is malingering (especially since the accident took place at work)(b). Transient global amnesia (usually related to TIA) is a sudden onset of retro- and anterograde amnesia(c). Dissociative amnesia is usually for a discreet period of time often related to childhood trauma (d).

What is the general goal of treatment during therapy with a patient with Dissociative Identity Disorder?

- A. Establishment of a traumatic event
- B. Treatment of depression and anxiety
- C. Adherence to antipsychotic medication
- D. Integration of personality
- E. Defining boundaries of the alters

Answer: D

- Patients with dissociative identity disorder usually have a history of severe childhood abuse, but the goal of therapy is not to establish that. Treatment of anxiety and depression is important, but again, not the goal. Ideally the therapist validates the patient's experience of separate personalities, but emphasized that they are all parts of the same human being with the goal of integrating the personality.