Chapter 11
National Task Group Early Detection Screen for Dementia (NTG-EDSD)

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Introduction

Alzheimer’s disease, one of the major causes of dementia, is a progressive degenerative disease which causes loss of neurons in the brain and leads to neurocognitive dysfunction. As noted by Alzheimer’s Europe [1], the symptoms may eventually manifest as dementia of the Alzheimer’s type which impacts cognition, function and behavior, becomes progressively worse over time and cannot be reversed. The World Health Organization (WHO) [2] has noted that the prevalence and incidence projections indicate that the number of people with dementia will continue to grow, particularly among the oldest old and that the total number of people with dementia worldwide in 2010 is estimated at 35.6 million and is projected to nearly double every 20 years, to 65.7 million in 2030 and 115.4 million in 2050. Further, dementia has a devastating impact on adults with an intellectual disability (ID) as well as on their families, friends, housemates, and service provider staff who often provide key long-term support and care; and that community services’ providers are facing a “graying” of their service population, many of whom are affected by cognitive decline and dementia, and are challenged to provide the most effective and financially viable daily supports and long-term care [3]. Further, specialized assessment and diagnostic resources are needed to help more effectively identify adults with an ID and dementia and a common screening instrument would be useful for the early detection and follow-through to assessment and diagnosis [3].