

Memory Institute is for the young, and old

The Memory Institute at Olympia Medical Center offers assessment and treatment of disorders that can affect people as young as 30.

Contrary to popular belief, memory disorders aren't limited to older adults, according to Dr. Robert Wang, geriatrician and co-founder of the Center for Geriatric Health at Olympia Medical Center, 5900 W. Olympic Blvd.

Although rare, significant memory changes can strike people in their 40s and 50s, he said.

"Young onset memory disorders can be destructive to families," Wang said. "In this age group, you find families with children at home, adult children caring for parents and significant financial obligations. It's an emotionally difficult burden."

Because memory disorders can run in the family, Wang suggests people who have relatives with dementia learn the

symptoms so they can recognize the signs before the disease progresses.

"It's important to catch it early so that we can try to slow down the progression of the disease," Wang said.

Since the causes of memory loss are vast, treatment is specific for each patient at The Memory Institute, where doctors conduct an evaluation to develop an individualized plan.

This may include further assessment, medication changes and stress management. Physicians also offer alternative treatment methods including herbal medication, homeopathy and acupuncture.

"Unfortunately, there is no conclusive test for Alzheimer's disease or other common causes of memory disorders," Wang said.

"The hard part is educating people about the symptoms. Since it's not something peo-

ple think about, they aren't noticing the signs."

For more information call The Memory Institute at 323-932-5477.

Symptoms

- Memory loss or memory changes
- Confusion
- Restlessness
- Misplacing things
- Trouble performing familiar tasks
- Changes in personality and behavior
- Poor or decreased judgment
- Impaired communication
- Inability to follow directions
- Problems with language, i.e. word finding problems
- Emotional apathy
- Social withdrawal and less willingness to interact with others
- Loss of motivation or initiative