Clinical Staging for Individuals on the Alzheimer's Disease Continuum

Stage 0 Asymptomatic, deterministic gene*

No evidence of clinical change. Biomarkers in normal range.

Stage 1 Asymptomatic, biomarker

Performance within expected range on objective cognitive tests.

No evidence of recent cognitive decline or new symptoms.

Stage 2 Transitional decline: mild detectable change, but minimal impact on daily function

Normal performance within expected range on objective cognitive tests.

Decline from previous level of cognitive or neurobehavioral function that represents a change from individual baseline within the past one to three years, and has been persistent for at least six months.

May be documented by evidence of subtle decline on longitudinal cognitive testing, which may involve memory or other cognitive domains but performance still within normal range.

May be documented through subjective report of cognitive decline.

May be documented with recent-onset change in mood, anxiety and/or motivation not explained by life events.

Remains fully independent with no or minimal functional impact on activities of daily living (ADLs).

Stage 3 Cognitive impairment with early functional impact

Performance in the impaired/abnormal range on objective cognitive tests.

Evidence of decline from baseline, documented by the individual's report or by an observer's (e.g., study partner) report or by change on longitudinal cognitive testing or neurobehavioral assessments.

Performs daily life activities independently but cognitive difficulty may result in detectable functional impact on complex ADLs (i.e., may take more time or be less efficient but still can complete — either self-reported or corroborated by an observer).

Stage 4 Dementia with mild functional impairment

Progressive cognitive and mild functional impairment on instrumental ADLs, with independence in basic ADLs.

Stage 5 Dementia with moderate functional impairment

Progressive cognitive and moderate functional impairment on basic ADLs requiring assistance.

Stage 6 Dementia with severe functional impairment

Progressive cognitive and functional impairment, and complete dependence for basic ADLs.

Created from data from Jack et al.53

^{*}Individuals with Down syndrome may not be fully independent even in stage 0 because of underlying intellectual disability. In these individuals, decline in functional independence from baseline may be a more appropriate indicator of stage.