

## HEALTH CONCERNS OF THE ELDERLY

### DEMENTIA

Fifty percent of all adults will need long-term care at some time according to research, and the trend is growing. Dementia is an enormous challenge for patients, care providers and relatives. The patient environment needs to be professionally designed to compensate for the changes in abilities like cognition and perception. Professional lighting significantly contributes to a successful environment in elderly care facilities. It helps ensure the highest level possible of patient independence as well as the physical and mental health of patients. Proper lighting solutions can also allow the healthcare professional to clearly and accurately handle tasks.

#### Understanding dementia

“Imagine all of your memories were chronologically kept in a book. You can only remember what is recorded on these pages. Suddenly ‘dementia’ comes along and starts to tear pages out of your book, beginning with the last pages.”

Dementia involves the progressive decline of mental abilities accompanied by changes in personality. Carrying out daily activities without help becomes difficult and sometimes impossible. Symptoms that further burden daily life include memory loss, loss of speech, difficulties with recognition and perception, difficulties with time and place orientation, and changes in behavior. The environment becomes more and more confusing to the dementia patient. It becomes more difficult to adequately process and react to environmental stimuli.

Secondary symptoms may involve angst, anxiety, flight rather than fight, depression, passiveness, aggressive behavior, and manic delusions.

Patients with dementia require intensive support and care, often around the clock. Keeping this population of patients as self-sufficient and mobile as possible is not only in line with common social values but also the decisive factor in reducing the workload of care providers.

Customized lighting solutions can motivate the elderly to stay self-sufficient and can also help facilitate the daily routines of healthcare providers.

