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## Gradual Loss: The Experience of Relatives of Dementia Patients

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Poster Presentation P62

**GRADUAL LOSS: THE EXPERIENCE OF RELATIVES OF  
DEMENTIA PATIENTS**

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By means of collaborative ethnographic research methods and photography, this poster presentation seeks to provide education about the causes and effects of dementia, so that others may understand what the families of dementia patients experience. Currently, an estimated 4.5 million Americans suffer from irreversible dementia. At present, no cure exists for irreversible dementia ñ a chronic, debilitating syndrome that leads to both mental and physical degradation of those afflicted. Obviously, an ill person with dementia suffers immeasurably; however, family members also face a particularly tragic experience. Caring for a family member with dementia can be an overwhelming burden which lasts for many years. Clearly, every family's experience is unique, yet many confront similar issues. This research highlights those issues and emphasizes how relatives of dementia patients cope with their experiences.