The Case of Hans

Hans is a 66- year-old man who has become so forgetful that his wife is now afraid to leave him alone, even in the house. At the age of 60, Hans took early retirement from his job in a government office because for the previous 5 years he had not been able to carry out his duty properly. He constantly made mistakes when delivering the mail to different sections of the building. At the same time, he had gradually given up his hobbies and had become more and more quiet. At first, his growing forgetfulness had not been very noticeable in his home environment. Then one day, at the age of 62, when leading a hike in an area he knew well, he could not find the way home. Since then, his memory failure becomes ever more pronounced. He mislaid things, forget appointments, and could no longer find his way around the area where he had live for more than 40 years. He failed to recognize even good friends and lost interest in newspapers and television. (Adapted from Ustun et al, 1996).