

11/6/12

SPLH 660

Parts 1 &2

Can Alzheimer's disease be diagnosed earlier if people are more aware of early signs?

Imagine a family member or loved one slowly starts to slip away and start to not recognize you or remember your name. The majority of patients tested are usually administered by family physicians to evaluate their symptoms but a vast majority end up inconclusive because of different perceptions on what it actually is or the signs. With so many cases going unnoticed for a long period of time, when it actually progresses at a fast rate the damage is irreversible.

Articles that I chose to review and back up my research question is the Predictors of physician referral for patient recruitment (Galvin, Meuser, Boise, Connell, 2010). As well as the journal article from the Alzheimers and Dementia handbook "Differential prediction of vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease in nondemented older adults within 5 years of initial testing "(Brewster, Mcdowell, Moineddin, Tierney, (2012). The reason for choosing the first two sources is to first get insight on how the initial testing is when a patient is initially getting tested and the other is to see some predictors into how or what could be the causes for early onset or the initial onset to begin with.

The studies show that there are various factors that have to be taken into account when a patient with signs of dementia is being evaluated. Most of the time

the first person to look at this patient is usually the family physician or someone of not that exact expertise so it is based on their opinion that may not always be right. So how are people even supposed to know if their loved ones have dementia when the symptoms are so adverse and not very much talked about? The best way is to educate more people. So this leads me to the research question: How can awareness of Alzheimer's be increased by looking for concrete symptoms and signs at an early stage to address the problem and get treatment?

Method

Participants. The participants that will be selected in order to retrieve data for statistical analysis will be families with members that have a history of dementia or have at least one family member diagnosed with Alzheimer's. A survey will be given out to the families that have family history and those that have a current member suffering.

All participants will be native English speakers within different regions of the US. All families will be of normal intelligence and confirmed family history of disease or family member that has had onset or more than a year of known diagnosis.

Measures. Since we are only measuring families and their way of life before and after dementia, more specifically Alzheimer's, this study will most likely have to be longitudinal before data can be reliable. The survey that will be mailed to these families will follow the Likert Scale and short answers that will ask questions such as how much each family knew of the symptoms or what to look for. Based on those results we will be more likely to see how much information they did or didn't receive before actual knowledge of the disease.

*Side note to the person reviewing this paper: Should I have added normal families without the history of disease to help support my research question?

Reliability. This will be rested by parallel forms reliability. Since we are seeing how much a family knew of the symptoms before and after we are expecting that more families will know of it after the survey is conducted. (This may need a little more help since I'm not really testing anything?)