

P02-413

PERSONALITY CHANGES IN MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT VERSUS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

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Introduction: Estimates for Romanian patients with dementia range from 200,000 to 300,000, but reports warn that actual numbers may be higher.

Objectives: Based on our experience we inferred that specific personality changes may occur in patients with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and Alzheimer (AD).

Aims: We tried to quantify such personality changes in MCI and AD patients.

Method: We designed an observational study (n=60 patients, aged 55+) with MCI (n=30; 50% male; mean age ~ 73) and moderate AD (n=30; 43.3% male (n=13); mean age ~74).

We "profiled" patient personality (Woodworth - Mathews questionnaire) and identified the most prominent features.

Results: The most prominent feature in MCI was depression (80%, n=24) followed by impulsive (26.7%, n=8) and emotional (23.3%, n=7) tendencies. Moderate AD patients exhibited less depression (43%, n=13). Twice more AD patients exhibited paranoid tendencies (36.7%, n=11) as compared to MCI patients (16.7%, n=5); schizoid tendencies in moderate AD reached 23.3% (n=7) vs. 0.03% (n=1) in MCI patients. Hypochondria, obsessions, emotional instability and antisocial behavior were similar.

Conclusions: Different dominant personality features as noted in MCI (depressive, impulsive and emotional tendencies) and moderate AD (paranoid, schizoid tendencies) require personalized treatment. Some features (depressive, impulsive and emotional tendencies) tend to be accentuated in MCI (barely impaired self awareness). Aggravated paranoid or schizoid tendencies in AD may result from impaired awareness; however, altered control over previously "dormant" personality features should be considered.