

(P06) COGNITIVE CONCERNS AS PREDICTORS OF LATER FUNCTIONING IN PERSONS WITH MS

Background: Cognitive difficulties in MS may affect social and role-related functioning as well as basic and instrumental activities of daily living. Memory impairment is the most common cognitive difficulty, affecting 40-60% of persons with MS. While the incidence and types of memory problems have been frequently studied, few studies have examined metamemory (self-report of memory ability and skills) in persons with MS or examined how perceptions of memory problems may predict later disability.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between perceived feelings about memory (e.g. confidence, embarrassment), perceived memory ability/failures and social and role-related functioning 3 years later. Specifically, we explored what contextual factors (age, length of diagnosis, depressive symptoms) and cognitive concerns (feelings about memory and memory ability/failures) predict later social and role functioning and whether the use of internal and external memory strategies might moderate relationships between cognitive concerns and social, role-emotional and role-physical functioning.

Design/Methods: A sample of 412 persons with MS (344 females, 68 males; mean age 54, mean time since diagnosis 16.9 years) completed a survey including measures of demographic and disease-related variables, the Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire and the Medical Outcomes Study SF-36 in 2003 and 2007. Correlational and hierarchical regression analyses were used to explore predictors of later functioning.

Results: All components of the metamemory scale were significantly related to functioning four years later. Years since diagnosis ($b=-.13$), depressive symptoms ($b=-.39$) and cognitive failures/mistakes ($b=-.26$) explained 24% of the variance in later social functioning. Depressive symptoms and cognitive mistakes explained 21% and 17% of the variance respectively in role-emotional and role-physical functioning.

Conclusion: Metamemory related to failures/mistakes was the strongest predictor of future functioning after the impact of contextual factors. Use of memory strategies did not moderate the impact of cognitive concerns on future functioning.

Study Supported by: This project was supported by Grant R01NR003195, National Institute of Nursing Research, National Institutes of Health

Alexa Stuijbergen, PhD, RN, FAAN
Adama Brown, PhD
The University of Texas at Austin
1700 Red River
Austin, TX 78701
United States