

Networks harness powerful resources to tackle complex challenges. This symposium leverages the power of one such network to advance research in cognitive health. Using literature reviews, we seek to aid in the translation of knowledge on cognitive aging and health into practice. By documenting research successes and identifying gaps, we highlight areas in which important lines of research can be propelled forward. The papers together focus on three dynamics of research practice: communication among researchers, commonly-used research tools, and the need to develop valid and reliable measures. The first paper examines nomenclature that scientists use to describe cognitive health in their research reporting, and makes recommendations for alignment of important concepts. The second and third papers explore commonly-used tools in intervention research: one on the use of psychosocial assessments typically employed with individuals with ADRD, such as for depression and quality of life, and the other on tools used by educational and intervention programs to evaluate caregiver knowledge of dementia. Each paper suggests that consistent measurement practices would enhance interpretation of findings across studies. The final paper considers a promising research area, walkable neighborhoods and cognitive health, and argues for the importance of developing valid and reliable measures in emerging research. Taken together, these papers provide critical reflection on current practices in cognitive aging research and suggest directions in which to build future investigation. In addition, this collection of papers fulfills the clarion call of The Healthy Brain Roadmap for finding ways to improve the cognitive health of all adults.

TERMS AND MEASURES OF COGNITIVE AGING AND COGNITIVE HEALTH: A SCOPING REVIEW

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The Healthy Brain Initiative: National Public Health Road Map to Maintaining Cognitive Health (2007) called on the research community to more widely disseminate its work on cognitive aging and cognitive health. However, communication beyond individual disciplines is complex. We identified terminology that social scientists use to describe cognitive aging and cognitive health among older adults, demonstrated how such terms are defined, and illustrated how these constructs are being measured. We searched terms such as Alzheimer* and dementia in studies between 2007 and 2018 (n=209). Geriatrics (n=95), neurology (n=81), psychiatry (n=65), and psychology (n=30) were most common disciplines; however, there was no consistency in how terms were used within and across disciplines. A detailed review of “cognitive impairment” and “mild cognitive impairment” demonstrated that formal definitions were provided infrequently

and measurement of constructs ranged widely. The variability in terminology, definitions and measures reflects a need for greater specificity in research communication.

OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT IN EARLY-STAGE MEMORY LOSS INTERVENTIONS: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Psychosocial and psychoeducational groups are widely recommended for individuals with early stage Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD). However, measurement challenges have hindered researchers’ efforts to demonstrate the efficacy of these groups. The purpose of this scoping review was to identify common measurement tools used in interventions for individuals with early stage ADRD and to develop suggestions for future investigations. CINAHL, Embase, PsycINFO, and PubMed were searched; 102 studies were reviewed. Inclusion criteria were set to capture intervention studies that utilized quantifiable measures with participants over age 50. Eleven articles met inclusion criteria. The majority of studies (73%) employed randomized controlled trial designs. Sample sizes ranged from N=20-236. Most commonly measured outcomes included depression, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and quality of life, but there was little consensus on how to best measure these outcomes. Standardization of psychosocial assessment tools are needed for future intervention studies with early stage ADRD.

A SCOPING REVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS FOR FORMAL AND INFORMAL DEMENTIA CAREGIVER PROGRAMS

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With the increase in our older adult population there is a need for dementia training for informal and formal dementia caregivers. The objective of this scoping study was to assess dementia knowledge instruments utilized in educational programs and interventions intended for formal and informal dementia caregivers. Scoping review methodology was used to search PubMed, PsycInfo, CINAHL, and Web of Science with tailored database search terms. The search yielded 8,101 results, with 35 studies meeting inclusion criteria. Studies were conducted in eight countries, had varying study designs (RCTs=9, non-RCTs=6, one-group study design=20), and utilized previously published (19) and author-developed (16) instruments. Only two studies focused on minority populations. While author-developed instruments may be more relevant and time-saving, studies should strive to validate instruments or use previously published instruments to help standardize findings across studies and better understand the effects of education programs on caregiver knowledge.