



NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HEALTH SERVICE PSYCHOLOGISTS

Cognitive Impairment

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Cognitive Impairment

- **2.5-5.5 million in US** have dementia
- PCPs miss as much as **76% of dementia**
 - **May look and act healthy** in routine encounters
 - **Patients may be unaware** of extent or impact of deficits
- **10-15% of older PC patients** have mild CI
 - **Not severe enough** to impair functioning
 - **Higher risk** for dementia

USPSTF Guidance

- **Insufficient evidence for/against screening**
 - Brief instruments *can* detect dementia
 - *But* no clear benefit of early detection
 - Unclear benefit of medication treatments
 - Unclear benefit of other (exercise, cognitive stimulation)
 - Unclear benefit of caregiver interventions
 - Unclear benefit on decision-making of pts, family, PCP
 - *And* concerns exist
 - Adverse effects of meds
 - Effects of false positive screens

So, What to Do?

- **Pressure may exist to screen**
 - Families, sometimes patients
 - Medicare Annual Wellness Exam
- **Consider stepped approach ***
 - Review of patient health risk assessment information
 - Patient observation
 - Use of unstructured queries
 - Use of structured cognitive assessment tools

* Alzheimer's Association Guidelines for Assessment

Cognitive Assessment Tools

- **Mini-Mental Status Exam (MMSE)**
 - Best studied – but long, and no longer free
- **Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA)**
 - Also long – may detect change better over short time
- **Clock Drawing Test (CDT)**
- Mini-Cog
 - 3-item recall, **Clock Drawing Test**
- **Memory Impairment Screen (MIS)**
 - 4 words: read, give category cue, recall

Treatments

- **Medication**
 - Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors
 - May slow cognitive and functional decline slightly
 - But unclear clinical significance
- **Caregiver-focused interventions**
 - Goal of improved caregiver skills, or caregiver support
 - Slight improvement, but unclear clinical significance
- **Cognitive training**
 - Some promising results, but poor quality research
- **Exercise**
 - No clear benefit on cognitive fxn or depression

Other Interventions

- **Family Support**
- **Assistance with home placement**
- **Initiate advanced planning** as soon as possible
- **Medications for symptom management** (e.g., agitation, sleep)

****The absence of data does not suggest an absence of action****



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