

3rd International Conference on **Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia**

August 31 - September 02, 2015 Toronto, Canada

Classification of behaviors in dementia based in impairment in theories based upon information processing pathways

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Objectives: There is vast heterogeneity in use of terminology and classification of behaviors in dementia with no universally accepted classification system.

Methods: Criteria proposed by Davis, Buckwalter and Burgio (1997) were identified as the basis for classification of behaviors in dementia. A review of the literature was done to identify the "Specification of the Theoretical Construct" (STC) to justify aggregation of similar behavioral symptoms into clinically meaningful categories.

Results: STC identified for these behavioral categories are those based in theories on information processing (TIP). Two behavioral categories emanating from pathological changes in TIP are: Disorganized Behaviors (DOB) and Misidentification Behaviors (MiB).

Discussion: DOB is the result of an alteration in the physiological status of the patient. This results in changes in arousal and attentiveness and this in turn leads to impairment of the sequential organization of information processing there by giving way to fragmentation of the process at many different levels of the brain. MiB are the result of a specific break down in two specific steps of TIP; schema identification and pattern recognition. This results in the failure of the usual pairing of old and new information with an altered sense of relatedness between self and persons, places, objects and events.

Biography

Atul Sunny Luthra is presently an associate clinical professor at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, in the faculty of health sciences, Department of Behavioural Neuroscience. He is also affiliated as a research scientist with the Research Institute for Aging, Schlegel, and University of Waterloo, Ontario. He is currently working as medical coordinator in the Program for Older Adults at Homewood Health Centre, Guelph, Ontario. He is affiliated in the same capacity with the St. Peter's site of Hamilton Health Science, Hamilton, Ontario. His clinical and research focus is on developing safe pharmacological and affordable non-pharmacological treatment interventions for behaviors in moderate to advanced dementia.

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