

2nd International Conference on **Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia** September 23-25, 2014 Valencia Convention Centre, Spain

A feasibility study of the experience sampling methodology in spousal caregivers of dementia patients

R J M van Knippenberg, M E de Vugt, R W Ponds, I Myin-Germeys and F R J Verhey
Maastricht University, The Netherlands

Background: Ecologically valid information on how caregivers perceive and react on a daily basis to the challenges of dementia is lacking. Insight into daily caregiver perceptions, moods, and activities in the presence and absence of the person with dementia may uncover subtle and finely drawn patterns of interaction in the flow of daily life. The Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM) is specifically designed for such momentary assessment in daily life. In the present study the feasibility of performing ESM in spousal caregivers of people with dementia was examined.

Methods: Thirty-one caregivers participated in the study and collected ESM data for six consecutive days. ESM was implemented using the PsyMate, an electronic device that is specifically developed for momentary assessment in clinical practice. The PsyMate was pre-programmed to generate ten random beeps a day. After each beep, short reports of the current context, subjective caregiver burden and mood were collected. After ESM data collection participants' general experiences with the PsyMate were evaluated. Feasibility was assessed by examining compliance and by subjective participant ratings of the difficulty, time burden, and overall acceptability of the methodology.

Results: Results show a high compliance rate of 78.8% (1466/1860). Only one participant was noncompliant with the ESM procedure. Participants considered the PsyMate to be a user-friendly and easily accessible device in which they could accurately describe their feelings and experiences. Moreover, participants reported that they did not experience the use of the PsyMate as too burdensome or time-consuming. Participation in the study did not affect their mood, daily activities or contact with other people.

Conclusion: The PsyMate is a feasible method to support caregivers in clinical practice. In addition to standard retrospective measurements, it offers new opportunities to gain more insight into the daily lives of people with dementia and their caregivers.

r.vanknippenberg@maastrichtuniversity.nl