ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, PERSONALITY AND MS PATIENT ESTIMATIONS OF MEMORY FUNCTION

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Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease of unknown etiology, characterized by a wide range of physical, cognitive, psychological, and behavioral symptoms. To effectively diagnose and treat MS, clinicians rely on patient reports of function to help identify and treat their problems (Kinsinger, Lattie, & Mohr, 2010). Specifically, self-reports of cognitive symptoms are a valuable source of information upon which clinicians depend (Van der Hiele, Spliethoff-Kamminga, Ruimschotel, Middelkoop, & Visser, 2012). While patient reports of cognitive functioning, including memory, are important, there has been substantial debate about the accuracy of such information. The present study investigated the association between general cognitive impairment, depression, anxiety, and personality function among MS patients, and determined how such variables related to the accuracy of MS patient reports of memory function. Findings indicated that increases in anxiety, depression, somatization, and negative impression management were all associated with a decrease in the estimation of memory function. Alternatively, an increase in positive impression management was associated with an increase in estimation of memory function. Cognitive function was not significantly correlated with estimation of memory function, though emerged as the only significant predictor of estimation of memory in the regression analysis. Findings highlight the presence of psychological concerns among MS patients and support the impact of cognitive function on the estimation of patient reported memory symptoms. To comprehensively, and efficaciously, treat individuals with MS, clinicians should interpret self-reports of cognitive function with caution and assess for psychological disturbance when possible.