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I38 The Capacity to Consent to Treatment in Patients With Alzheimer's Disease

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to assess the capacity of patients affected by Alzheimer's disease to consent to treatment.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing a framework for assisting patients with Alzheimer's disease to understand their proposed medical treatments.

Informed consent is an essential element in the doctor-patient relationship. In particular, obtaining valid informed consent from patients with neurocognitive diseases is presently a subject undergoing intense study and scrutiny. For this reason, it was decided to look at the factors associated with informed consent in elderly patients with Alzheimer's disease, as defined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V)*.

Methods: The experimental group was composed of 70 elderly patients in the Neurodegenerative Disease Unit of the Policlinico of the University of Bari. The control group consisted of approximately 80 elderly patients in the Geriatric Hypertension Clinic Unit at the Policlinico of the University of Bari without clinically relevant neurocognitive problems. The inclusion criteria included: outpatient status, primary school education level at a minimum, conversant in Italian, informed consent, and participation in the study.

The subjects were recruited from the previously mentioned facilities from the outpatient and day hospital programs. Subjects who were hospitalized were excluded.

After acquiring written consent to participate in the research, each participant was subject to ongoing evaluations, as follows: (1) assessment of comprehension sheet; (2) Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI) and Assessment Overall Functioning (VGF); (3) neurological evaluation, (4) neuropsychological assessment (mini mental state examination, Frontal Assessment Battery (FAB), Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test™, token test, verbal fluency test, Boston Naming Test, Stroop Test, Poppelreuter Test, Clock Drawing Test); and, (5) MacArthur Competence Assessment Tool for Treatment (MacCAT-T), a semi-structured interview which explores four dimensions of patients' mental capacities (i.e., understanding (subscale ranges from 0 to 6), appreciating (subscale ranges from 0 to 4), reasoning (subscale ranges from 0 to 8), and expressing a choice (subscale ranges from 0 to 2)). The MacCAT-T does not provide a total score or a cut-off to define patient's mental capacity. The gold standard is an expert's opinion and the semi-structured interview with the caregiver (Consent to Treatment Interview (CTI)).

Results/Conclusions: Many of the patients in this sample did not seem to have the proper cognitive competence to provide valid consent. The present survey intends to analyze the possible qualitative and quantitative correlations between cognitive functioning and the capacity to provide valid consent with respect to the severity of Alzheimer's disease. The results of this study are presented.

Capacity to Consent, Treatment, Alzheimer's Disease

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