

Emotional Memory In People With Dementia

Third in a Series of Podcasts:
Elder Abuse Research For Non-Researchers
Special Guest: Aileen Wiglesworth, Ph.D.
University of California, Irvine, Program in Geriatrics

2012

This podcast was completed for the National Center on Elder Abuse and is supported in part by a grant (No. 90-AB-0002) from the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Grantees carrying out projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Therefore, points of view or opinions do not necessarily represent official Administration on Aging or DHHS policy.

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Podcast Sponsor

- ◆ National Center On Elder Abuse (NCEA)
 - ◆ Directed by US Administration on Aging
 - ◆ Helps ensure that elders and adults with disabilities live with dignity and without abuse, neglect, and exploitation
 - ◆ Based at UC Irvine's Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse And Neglect in the Program in Geriatrics
 - ◆ A resource for education, research, and promising practices in stopping abuse



Podcast Speakers



- ✕ Guest Speaker: Aileen Wiglesworth, Ph.D.
 - ◆ Director of Research, Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect at UC Irvine
 - ◆ Associate Clinical Professor, Family Medicine, UC Irvine School of Medicine



Moderator: Mary Twomey, MSW

- ◆ Co-Director of the NCEA
- ◆ Co-Director of the Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect at UC Irvine

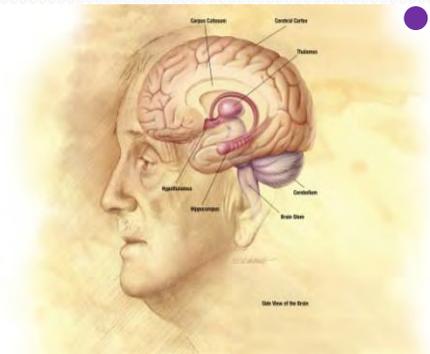


Research by the Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect at Univ. of CA, Irvine

- ◆ Visit www.centeronelderabuse.org for research information on:
 - ◆ People with dementia as witnesses to emotional events
 - ◆ Geriatric bruising
 - ◆ Caregiving study: caring for those with dementia
 - ◆ Pressure ulcer study



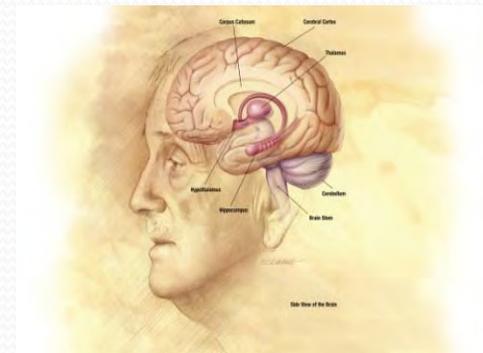
Emotional Memory In People With Dementia



- University of California, Irvine study explores the characteristics of **people with dementia and their retention of autobiographical, emotional memories**
- May change the way vulnerable elders are considered as witnesses to their mistreatment
- Visit www.centeronelderabuse.org for more information



- Can elders with dementia be good witnesses to emotional events in their lives?
- What characterizes elders with dementia who have reliable memory for emotional events?



Emotional Memory In People With Dementia

- ◆ Special Guest: Aileen Wiglesworth, Ph.D., Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect, University of California, Irvine, Program in Geriatrics
- ◆ Third in a Series of Podcasts: Elder Abuse Research For Non-Researchers

www.youtube.com/user/NCEAatUCI

2012



Why Study Emotional Memory Of Those With Dementia?

- ◆ Elders with dementia are being abused
- ◆ The elder's testimony is seldom considered as evidence
- ◆ Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse & Neglect decided to conduct research on the issue.
- ◆ This project was funded by Grant 2007-MU-0002 from the Department of Justice (DOJ)



Emotionally Influenced Memory

- ◆ Emotional involvement makes an event more memorable
- ◆ Suspected that some people with dementia would have more robust emotional memories than non-emotional memories
- ◆ “Emotionally influenced memory” is the conscious memory of emotionally arousing events
- ◆ Instruments exist for measuring emotional memory



Study Development and Design

- ◆ Talked with people in criminal justice to find out legitimate ways of conducting interviews
- ◆ 95 people with mild to moderate dementia were asked about recent events that made them happy or sad or that were pleasant or unpleasant
- ◆ Also had list of common life events that were used to trigger memories.



Development and Design (cont'd)

- ◆ Stories were corroborated with family members who knew about events
- ◆ Did not study people with severe dementia
- ◆ Compared with 50 people in control group who did not have dementia



Study Findings

- ◆ Overwhelming majority of subjects had some memory for emotional events in their lives
 - ◆ Many had some strong memories or well- corroborated memories
 - ◆ Many subjects had memories with some details wrong but they were clearly remembering a key event
- ◆ Very few people could not recall any emotional events in their lives



Study Findings

- ◆ Two research questions
 - ◆ Do people with dementia have emotionally influenced memory?
 - ◆ If some do and some don't, how do we identify the ones that do?
- ◆ People with mild disease are more likely to have reliable memory than those with moderate disease.
 - ◆ There were also people with moderate disease who had reliable memory



Study Findings

- ◆ People who had emotionally influenced memory:
 - ◆ Those who could give **more details** were more likely to be giving an accurate memory
 - ◆ Those who reported **negative and positive** memories were more likely to have reliable memory
 - ◆ Those who could recall an event **just by being asked to tell something happy or sad** were more likely to have reliable memory.



Study Findings

- ◆ At session end, researcher would ask again about the same emotional memories
 - ◆ Those with more reliable memory were able to repeat the memory
 - ◆ Some may not remember having talked about it, but will remember it again



Application to Elder Abuse Victims

- ◆ Have to be careful applying findings
- ◆ This research shows that those with dementia have some emotional memory
- ◆ Person with dementia could give some testimony about an event—with other corroborating evidence as part of a case
- ◆ More research needed



Additional Research Info

- ◆ Visit www.centeronelderabuse.org/research.asp for more information on:
 - ◆ People with dementia as witnesses to emotional events
 - ◆ Geriatric bruising
 - ◆ Caregiving study: caring for those with dementia
 - ◆ Pressure ulcer study



Elder Abuse Research For Non- Researchers



Special Guest:
Mark S. Lachs,
MD, MPH



- Tips For Evaluating Research Studies
- Understanding Incidence vs. Prevalence
- Challenges and Future Directions in Elder Abuse Research

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Music: "In My Life"
performed by the Beatles

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