

Understanding patients' and significant others' preferences on diagnostic testing for dementia: an integrative review

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Objective: To explore the preferences of people with memory complaints (PwMC) and their significant others regarding diagnostic testing for dementia.

Methods: A systematic literature search was conducted in PubMed, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Web of Science, and Embase. Selection of abstracts and papers was performed independently by two researchers. Methodological quality was assessed with the Mixed Method Appraisal Tool. Result sections of the selected papers were thematically analyzed.

Results: From 2497 citations, seven qualitative studies and two mixed methods studies were included. Overall quality of the studies was high to moderate. A thematic synthesis showed that preferences for diagnostic testing arose from the feeling of needing to do something about the symptoms, beliefs on the necessity of testing, and expected outcomes of diagnostic testing. These views were influenced by whether symptoms were normalized or validated, the support or wishes of the social network, interactions with health care professionals, the health status of the PwMC, and societal factors such as stigma and socioeconomic status.

Conclusion: A variety of considerations with regard to decision-making on diagnostic testing for dementia were identified. This emphasizes the need to explore individual preferences in a process of shared decision-making to facilitate a timely dementia diagnosis.

Keywords: Dementia; Preferences; Timely diagnosis; Patient; Significant other