

Diagnosis of dementia in people with intellectual disabilities - A German pilot study

Aims: As for the normal population the onset of dementia has been increased for people with intellectual disabilities (ID). Professionals are faced with the problem of diagnosing dementia in this group and a lot of research has been done on this issue over the last decades. In Germany no such instrument exists. Therefore an instrument has been developed for the early detection of dementia in people with ID.

Method: Based on a systematic literature research and a practical application phase, an instrument has been developed consisting of a caregiver interview and a neuropsychological assessment. The instrument has been tested in a two-year follow-up study with 128 participants living in four German residential facilities for persons with ID. All participants have been tested in a 6-months interval.

Results: Progression and onset of dementia could be detected by the instrument although the caregiver interview showed to be the best measure for early detection of dementia.

Conclusion: For early detection, people with ID should be tested on a regular basis. Source of information should be the individual and the caregiver. There is a need for future research in developing appropriate dementia screening instruments.

Kuske, B, Specht, D, Gövert, U, Wolff, C & Müller, SV (2014). Diagnosis of dementia in people with intellectual disabilities – a German pilot study. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 27, 4, 396.