NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Is Pre-Assessment Counselling (PAC) needed to prepare people for a Dementia diagnosis?

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Stigma and fear **hinder** help-seeking behaviours for dementia assessment, **preventing** intervention and support for people with dementia and carers. We are working with an NHS Trust who provides pre-assessment counselling (PAC) to enable understanding and address **concerns** with assessment and diagnosis disclosure.

WHAT IS PAC?

PAC allows people to **discuss** the fears and concerns of people with dementia with **information** and **support**. Focused on timely rather than quick diagnoses, it **returns agency** to people with dementia, **enables** informed choices, **combats** stigma, and **alleviates** anxiety through discussions that aid comprehension, planning, and **assists** adjustment to potential diagnoses.

WHO BENEFITS?

An evaluation of 3044 patient cases (42.21% male, 52.59% female) found males are **more inclined** to consent to dementia assessment post-PAC, which is **contrary to existing evidence**. Across ethnic groups, PAC appears acceptable, with no statistically significant reduction in consent rates among non-White British patients which, again, is **in contrast to previous research**.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Not a lot! This is a **heavily under-researched** area. Our systematic review analysed **just 4** peer-reviewed publications spanning 2007-2020 involving clinicians, people with dementia & carers, utilising randomized controlled trials, interviews, and mixed-methodology research.

Our findings highlight the **pivotal role** of PAC in dementia diagnosis, **offering benefits** including psychological adjustment, diagnosis **quality** and the importance of familial involvement. PAC **enhances** preparedness, **reduces** stigma and **promotes** a better understanding of dementia, ultimately **supporting** patient-centred care and **increasing** clinicians confidence in diagnosis delivery.

WHAT NEXT?

Sparse research and mixed methods in our systematic review hindered a comprehensive understanding of PAC. The UK-centric focus of selected papers indicates a global representation gap. **Lack of a universal definition for PAC necessitates exploration** of best practices and its impact on families and carers.
Future research should compare satisfaction scores of the diagnosis process and assess its effect on fear levels and psychological wellbeing, as well as its influence on GP referrals to enhance dementia care practices globally.

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For more information about this study, please email marie.janes@ntu.ac.uk and/or visit: https://arc-em.nihr.ac.uk/phd-and-post-doc/understanding-impact-pre-assessment-counselling-dementia