SUBJECTIVE MEMORY COMPLAINTS, DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AND INSTRUMENTAL ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING IN MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

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Background: Subjective memory complaints (SMCs) are a cardinal feature of mild cognitive impairment (MCI). However, the diagnostic relevance of SMCs in individuals with MCI is still unresolved. The aim of this present study is to determine clinical correlates of SMCs and the potential differences due to different aspects of memory complaints in patients with MCI.

Methods: We examined the cross-sectional associations between SMC severity and depressive symptoms, instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), and cognitive measures in sixty-six individuals with MCI (mean age: 65.7 ± 8.01 years). SMCs were assessed using the Prospective and Retrospective Memory Questionnaire (PRMQ), which contains 16 items that describe everyday memory failure of both prospective (eight items) and retrospective (eight items) memory.

Results: SMC severity (measured as PRMQ total score) was associated with stronger depressive symptoms and worse IADL performance. SMCs were not related to cognitive measures. Each PRMQ-prospective and retrospective memory subscore was also associated with increased depressive symptoms and IADL impairment. A subsequent regression analysis showed that the main contributors to prospective and retrospective memory complaints were depressive symptoms and IADL impairment, respectively.

Conclusions: The results of this study suggest that SMCs are more associated with depressive symptoms and IADL problems than with cognitive performance in individuals with MCI. Furthermore, the differences between the main causes of prospective and retrospective memory complaints suggest that the retrospective memory complaints of SMCs reflect more organically driven IADL impairment, while the prospective memory complaints are more affect-driven.