

Language Assessment in Hindi-English Bilingual Patients with Dementia

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ABSTRACT

The paper provides detailed assessment of a multilingual dementia patients using Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination (BDAE) adapted into Hindi by the author. After providing a brief review of literature on Dementia as understood in the west, the responses of the patient under different components of the BDAE are presented. The latter part of this paper deals with the need for inclusion of narratives from neurologically impaired patients. Normative data from healthy subjects are analyzed and presented along with some samples from patients with aphasia and dementia.

Keywords: Dementia, aphasia, narratives

1. INTRODUCTION

Dementias are not homogenous entities. Primary progressive Aphasia and semantic Dementia are classical examples of a putative diffuse pathology, heralding its onset and initial course in a rather circumscribed focal manner and well defined clinical picture of linguistic deficits. On the other hand cerebro-vascular disease, by producing discrete lesions in brain leads to a variety of “aphasic syndromes.” Dementias and aphasias provide us a opportunity to tease out the structural and functional components of complex higher functions like memory, language and general intelligence and consciousness, provided we ask relevant questions and have right tools for assessment and research.

The importance of studying language deficits in Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias has been recognized for long. It has gained momentum after availability of structural and functional neuroimaging facilities and refinement of cognitive neuro-psychological and linguistic theories.