

BACKGROUND

People can benefit greatly from early detection of cognitive impairment through routine screening in the primary care setting. This study examined attitudes toward cognitive screening of patients seen in outpatient primary care clinics.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

- 401 patients
 - Aged 60+ years (65% female)
 - Recruited from three primary care clinics in Central and South Texas

MEASURES

- 10-item survey assessing attitudes toward and experiences with cognitive screening.
 - Six questions were binary (yes/no; see Table 1).
 - Four items assessed positive and negative aspects of screening and health using a 5-point Likert scale (see Table 2).

ANALYSIS

- Non-parametric statistics were conducted to investigate relationships between survey responses and demographic variables.

There are gender and racial/ethnic disparities in cognitive screening attitudes/experiences. Concern about the financial burden of screening may serve as a barrier for some patients.

RESULTS

Table 1. Percentage of Patients Endorsing Certain Attitudes and Experiences with Cognitive Screening

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
1) Is it important to check memory as part of a doctor’s visit?	95	5
2) Would you trust results of a memory screen?	96.2	3.8
3) Would you be willing to pay for a memory screening?	56.3	43.7
4) Has your doctor ever screened you for memory problems?	32.2	67.8
5) Would you go to a specialist if your doctor recommended follow up for memory problems?	96.8	3.2
6) If available, would you complete a memory screening at home?	95.8	4.3

Table 2. Percentage of Patients Endorsing Positive and Negative Aspects of Cognitive Screening and Health

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
If a memory screening test showed your risk is high, it might have a large financial burden on you or your family.	18	35.9	29.9	11.7	4.5
Diagnosing memory loss at a very mild stage will allow me to get medication to treat it.	34.2	43.6	17.2	4.2	0.7
Early diagnosis will allow me to plan my life.	46.9	43.1	8.8	1	0.3
Compared to other people my age, I have a pretty good chance of getting Alzheimer’s.	5	10.5	43.6	28.9	12

Table 3. Demographic Differences in Cognitive Screening Attitudes/Experiences

Question	Demographic Variable	Statistic	<i>P</i>
4	Age	ρ = 0.3	< .001
4	Sex	72% F 61% M	.02
4	Ethnicity	72% NH 55% H	< .001
5	Race	16% NW 2% W	< .001

Note: F=female; M=male; NH=non-Hispanic; H=Hispanic; NW=non-White; W=White