

Lights, Camera, Awareness: Evaluating a Multilingual Short Film's Impact on Dementia Knowledge in India

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Aim

- Nearly 9 million people in India live with dementia.
- Dementia is often unrecognised due to misconceptions and limited community awareness.
- The study evaluated a co-designed, multilingual short film to improve dementia literacy.
- It assessed the film's impact on:
 - a. Knowledge of dementia
 - b. Recognition of dementia symptoms
 - c. Help-seeking behaviours in Indian communities



Methods

Design: was a pre-post multilingual (English, Hindi, and Kannada) online survey conducted across India from 26 April to 30 June 2023.



Recruitment was via social media, WhatsApp, emails, and hospital advertisements

Outcomes: Dementia literacy using a bespoke survey and composite score (range 0-13) capturing knowledge, symptom recognition, and help-seeking items.

Analyses: Pre-post differences were assessed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Multivariable linear regression was used to identify independent predictors of baseline dementia literacy.



Results

415 participants



Mean age:
44.6 (SD 14.79)



Women 224
(54%)



University
educated 333
(80.2%)



Urban
residence
378 (91.1%)

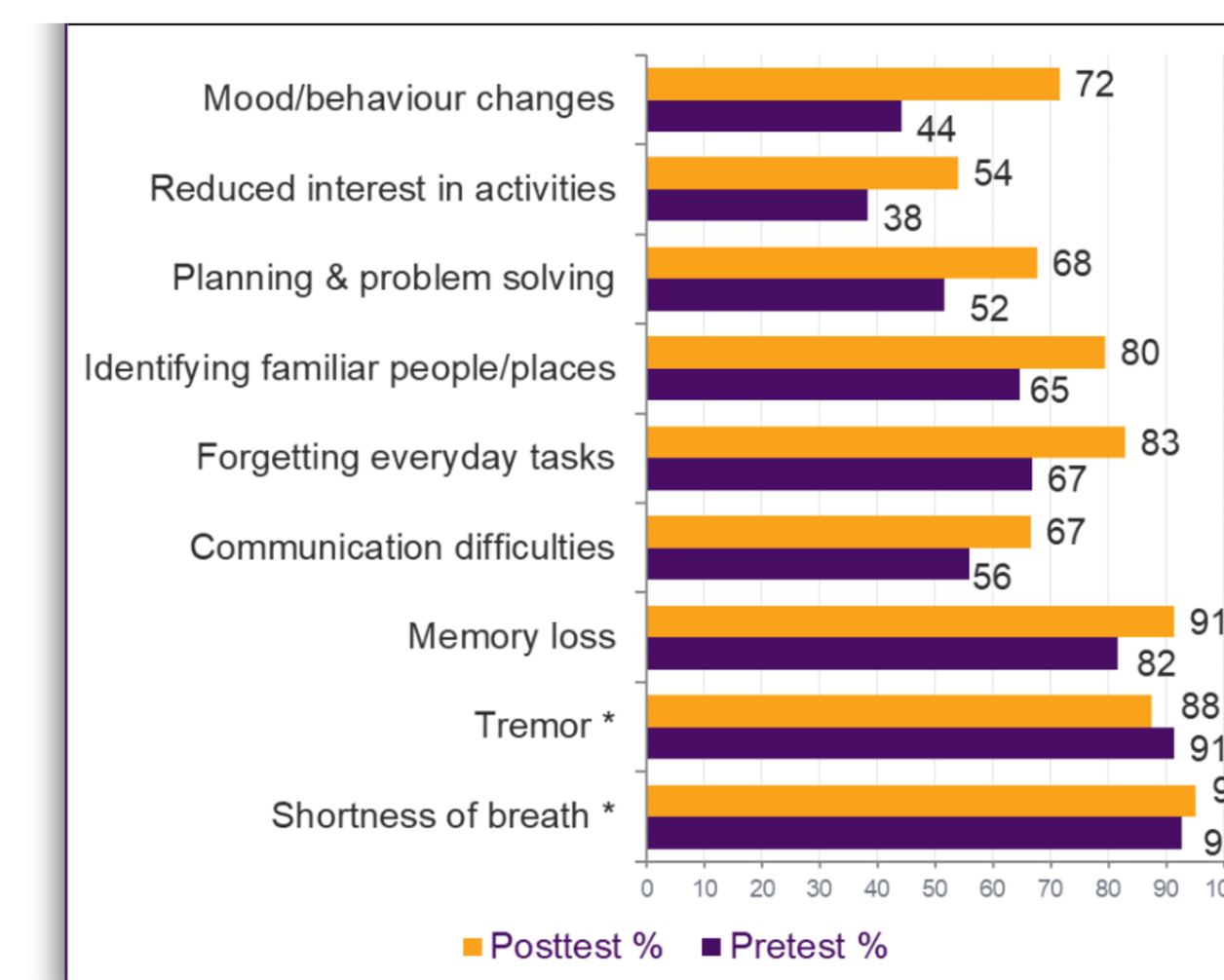


Professional
occupation
193 (46.5%)

Dementia Literacy

After viewing the film, the proportion of participants correctly identifying dementia as a disorder affecting the brain increased significantly from 264 (63.4%) to 314 (75.7%) (McNemar $\chi^2(1) = 22.94$, $p < 0.001$).

Symptom Recognition



Help Seeking

Before viewing the film, 94.2% reported seeking help from a doctor, this increased by 5.1% post- viewing (McNemar's $\chi^2 = 6.04$, $p = 0.014$).

However, participants continued to endorse both medical and non-medical care options, including home-based management and seeking help from religious or faith healers.

Sociodemographic Influences on Dementia Literacy

- Baseline dementia literacy was higher among women, individuals with higher educational attainment, professionals, and urban residence.
- Education attainment emerged as the strongest independent predictor of dementia literacy.

Conclusions

Short, multilingual, co-designed film are a scalable public health tool for improving dementia literacy and recognition of dementia symptoms. However, many participants still believe that dementia is a normal part of ageing.

Continued preference for care at home and visiting faith healers alongside medical consultation likely reflects sociocultural norms and medical pluralism in India rather than informational gaps alone. Information-based interventions alone are insufficient to shift culturally embedded care practices.

More context-appropriate, targeted communication strategies are needed for rural and less-educated populations where access to dementia resources remains limited.



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Access the research article

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Partners

