Health Literacy in Context

Understanding health literacy among individuals with mild cognitive impairment and their family members

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- *Research field*: Health literacy and Mild Cognitive Impairment

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Background

Health literacy: Health literacy involves people's knowledge, motivation and competences to access, understand, assess, and apply health-related information (Sørensen et al., 2012)

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI): A preclinical transitional stage between normal ageing and dementia (Mark & Brehmer, 2022)

Why this matters

Health literacy ← **Health librarians** → **Information practices**

The gap this study addresses

Half of dementia cases are preventable (Livingston et al., 2024)

MCI provides an opportune time to delay progression to dementia by:

Improving knowledge of dementia

Understanding management strategies

Providing access to available resources

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Aim



- To identify facilitators and barriers to accessing, understanding, evaluating, and applying health information;
- To develop strategies to improve dementia knowledge at the pre-dementia stage

Methods



Design

Exploratory qualitative study



Participants

People with MCI and their family members



Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews



Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022)

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Participants characteristics

Participants	Number	Mean age ± SD (years)	Gender (%)
People with MCI	11	76.8 ± 8.8	Females: 8 (72.7); Males: 3 (27.2)
Family members	11	60.5 ± 15.8	Females: 7 (63.6); Males: 4 (36.3)

Findings

Facilitators of health literacy

- Providing **easy to understand** information
- **Repeated exposure** to information in different settings
- **Printed materials;** Preferred information sources among people with MCI
- **Online information;** Preferred information sources among family members

Barriers to health literacy

- Low perceived **seriousness** of the condition
- **Information overload**
- Challenges in **navigating the healthcare system**
- Limited skills in **finding and evaluating online information**
- Limited understanding of how to **apply** health information in practice

Implications for practice

Clinical information team

Assist with guideline development for MCI diagnosis, management, and service delivery

Consumer health information services

Improving access to trustworthy information;

Designing accessible information resources, such as developing patient education materials

Health librarians

Connecting individuals with trustworthy health information and assisting them to navigate misinformation and disinformation

Public libraries

Hosting health education programs;

Assisting with online information seeking, such as navigating digital health services (e.g., My Aged Care)

Thank You!

Questions & discussion

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