

## Symposium B4: Tailored Interventions

### *Development of a Best Candidate Profile for Cognitive Interventions in Persons with Dementia*

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**Purpose:** To critically analyze the scientific literature to determine characteristics of persons with dementia that may moderate participation in cognitive interventions and predict positive intervention-related outcomes. A profile describing best candidates for cognitive interventions in dementia will be proposed.

**Background:** Cognitive activity to delay dementia onset or slow progression has generated extensive interest in geriatric research and practice. Individual studies have identified useful cognitive approaches for maintaining function or improving quality of life, but the overall body of evidence is insufficient to support practice recommendations. Personally tailoring dementia interventions improves outcomes, but identifying best candidates for cognitive interventions may maximize impact and help explain conflicting results.

**Methods:** Electronic searches were conducted in PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and The Cochrane Library for studies of cognitive interventions in persons with dementia as well as studies examining the influence of personal characteristics on intervention outcomes. A thorough appraisal of the literature informed the selection of potential moderating factors to include in a best candidate profile for cognitive interventions in dementia.

**Results:** Four personal characteristics were selected for the profile: premorbid personality, awareness of impairment, apathy, and degree of cognitive plasticity.

**Conclusions and Implications:** A best candidate profile is proposed to enhance selection of persons with dementia for cognition-focused interventions. Alterations in personality occur during dementia, but premorbid personality traits remain useful indicators of dementia behaviors and activity preferences. Awareness of cognitive impairment may influence participation in cognitive interventions and anticipated outcomes. The loss of motivation characteristic of apathy in dementia is an important consideration when developing interventions that require prolonged attention. Although cognitive plasticity declines in dementia, the maintenance of learning potential in earlier stages highlights individual variability that potentially influences cognitive intervention outcomes.