

## Investigative pattern for patients with dementia: Findings from a tertiary care setting in South India

Himanshu Gupta, Krishna Prasad, Shikala Bharath,  
Om Parkash, PT Shiv Kumari, Naveen Kumar, Mathew Verghese

**Abstract:** *The aim of the study was to understand the relevance of the investigations in confirming the diagnosis of dementia in clinical practice. A retrospective chart review of 51 individuals with an ICD-10 diagnosis of dementia and who received outpatient treatment from at the geriatric clinic, at tertiary centre, the National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore between January and December 2007. The most commonly performed investigations were imaging studies done in 68.6% of cases. Routine bio-chemical investigations & thyroid function tests were done in 41.1% of cases. Haemogram was done in 35.2%. Blood vitamin B12 levels were done in 22.4% and Folic acid in 15.6%. Screening for VDRL was tested in 13.6% but HIV was tested in 1% only. CSF studies were done in 5% of the cases. These findings may suggest that imaging techniques were the most commonly used investigation in dementia patients to confirm diagnosis but study with larger number of population is required for further confirm these findings.*

**Keywords:** Dementia, Investigative Techniques

JMHHB 2010; 15 (2) :91-95

### INTRODUCTION

Dementia is a clinical syndrome of acquired cognitive impairment produced by brain dysfunction. A careful, systematic evaluation has been recommended for all patients with possible dementia.<sup>1</sup> Dementia due to potentially reversible etiologies is an important group of dementias to be identified not only because of the number of such patients encountered but also due to the potential for substantial improvement with treatment.<sup>2</sup>

In one study<sup>3</sup> from developing country, the reported frequency of dementia due to potentially reversible causes found to be 18% though causes were clinically suspected in only 58% of patients. This study commented that that the cost of investigating for a few causes that might be reversible has to be balanced against the benefit

that would accrue to the patient in whom such a cause is identified and treated. This is probably more important for developing economies like India, where affordability of investigations is an important factor<sup>4</sup> and the resources available to diagnose them is limited.<sup>5,6</sup> Due to these problems, the physicians should be cautious to investigate a case for dementia.

To deal with above questions, we, therefore, studied retrospectively, patients with dementia presenting to the Geriatric services of our hospital with aim to understand the relevance of the investigations in confirming the diagnosis of dementia in clinical practice.

### METHODS

The work reported in this paper was conducted at the geriatric clinic, a specialty outpatient clinic run by the Department of Psychiatry at tertiary