Letter to the Editor: Awareness and Understanding of Dementia in Community-Dwelling Adults Without Dementia and Stroke

I have read the original article by Park et al.¹⁾, 'Awareness and Understanding of Dementia in Community-Dwelling Adults Without Dementia and Stroke' with great interest. As suggested in the original article, understanding and knowledge of dementia is very important for the general population. Dementia is one of the most distressing and burdensome mental health problems in the aged population²⁾. Although acetylcholinesterase inhibitors (e.g., tacrine, donepezil, rivastigmine, and galantamine) and N-methyl-D-aspartate receptor antagonists (e.g., memantine) have demonstrated efficacy in the temporal symptomatic control of cognitive decline and daily function in dementia patients, their effect is not sufficient to restore premorbid function³⁾. Therefore, prevention and early diagnosis of dementia is very important to decrease the prevalence and progression of dementia.

The Korean government has made an effort to prevent and diagnose dementia early over the last decade. To achieve these aims, knowledge of dementia among the general population is indispensable. In regards to this point, this study has obvious academic value. Based on the academic value of this article, I suggest adding text that addresses some questions related to the description and analysis:

First, how did the investigators diagnose dementia and stroke? Because dementia or stroke can affect the cognitive function of subjects, the diagnostic process is very important to ensure that the subjects are cognitively normal. I think

that a detailed evaluation process was presented in the article about The Prevention of Stroke and Dementia (PRESENT) project. However, there was no reference to the PRESENT project. If possible, providing additional references can help readers who are interested in this article.

Second, how was the questionnaire evaluating the knowledge of dementia developed? As cited in reference 6 of the original article, there is already an article about a representative nationwide survey exploring knowledge of dementia. The questionnaire consisted of 14 items⁴⁾. Explaining the process of developing the questionnaire and comparing differences in the questionnaires between the 2 studies will be very informative.

Third, among the 13 questions, only 1 question required 'No' as a correct answer. Sometimes, responders answer all questions with all 'Yes' or all 'No.' In this questionnaire, in cases of all 'Yes,' they will be classified as having 12 correct knowledge items of dementia among the 13 possible. This score is higher than the mean score (9.8) of subjects who are considered to be 'very much aware' individuals. Thus, I think that presenting the proportion of subjects who responded to all questions by answering all 'Yes' or all 'No' will be very informative.

In summary, Park et al.¹⁾ conducted a valuable study that examined the degree of interest in dementia, comprehension of dementia, and level of knowledge about dementia with a relatively large sample size. However, as suggested above, adding additional information will improve the quality and value of this article significantly.

Conflicts of Interest Disclosures: The researcher claims no conflicts of interest.

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