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SUBJECTIVE MEMORY COMPLAINTS AND MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

M. Simoes¹, L.C. Castro², O. Ribeiro³, T. Salgado⁴, C. Paz⁴

¹Department of Psychiatry, Centro Hospitalar Psiquiátrico de Coimbra, Coimbra, ²Department of Psychiatry, Hospital de Magalhães Lemos, Porto, ³Department of Psychology, School of Health Sciences of the University of Aveiro, Aveiro, ⁴Department of Psychogeriatrics, Hospital de Magalhães Lemos, Porto, Portugal

Background: Subjective Memory Complaints (SMC) are common in clinical practice. The clinical significance of these subjective complaints among older individuals is not well understood.

Aim: To study and discuss the association between SMC and MCI, underlining the importance of an adequate clinical assessment of SMC in the elderly.

Methods: Review of the literature.

Results: There is no consistent definition of SMC in the literature. Some prospective studies showed an association with objective memory impairments, conceptualizing SMC as a Pre-Mild Cognitive Impairment. SMC are also currently considered to be a core feature of Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). Cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies showed conflicting results concerning the association between SMC and MCI.

Discussion: The understanding of the predictive value of SMC in cognitive decline is still poorly understood. It is important to define criteria aimed to increase specificity of memory complaints, allowing an earlier identification of populations with higher risk of MCI. Future research on this complex association is important to identify SMC individuals at increased risk of conversion to MCI and dementia.