

Measuring the extent and severity of antisocial behaviors in behavioral-variant frontotemporal dementia using a novel informant-based questionnaire

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State of the art: Antisocial behaviors are common and problematic in frontotemporal dementia, but there are no validated measures to identify and quantify antisocial behaviors.

Methodology: We developed an informant-based social behavior questionnaire (SBQ) to measure 26 antisocial behaviors on a discrete scale from absent (0) to very severe (5). We administered the SBQ to 25 patients with behavioral variant frontotemporal dementia (bvFTD), 18 patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD), and 18 patients with other frontotemporal lobar degeneration syndromes (FTLD). We measured group-level differences in antisocial behaviors and their severity. We also assessed psychometric properties of the SBQ using Cronbach's alpha and exploratory factor analysis. Finally, we used cluster analysis to determine whether the SBQ could identify a subgroup of patients with severe antisocial behaviors.

Results: Antisocial behaviors identified using the SBQ were common and severe in bvFTD, occurring in 92% of patients and resulted in arrests in 12% of patients. Antisocial behaviors were more severe in bvFTD patients compared with other patient groups, particularly in the subset of patients with milder cognitive impairment. The SBQ was internally consistent (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81) and exploratory factor analysis supported construct validity. Finally, the cluster analysis identified a subset of dementia patients with severe antisocial behaviors.

Conclusion: The SBQ is a useful measure to identify, characterize, and measure the severity of antisocial behaviors in dementia patients.

Conflicts of interest

N/A