

Increased social vulnerability in behavioral-variant frontotemporal dementia

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State of the art: Older adults have increased vulnerability to fraud and scams. Dementia is a potential risk factor for social vulnerability, but it remains unknown if this risk is distinctive across different types of dementia. We hypothesize that social vulnerability will be increased in behavioral-variant frontotemporal dementia (bvFTD) and will relate to social-emotional processes.

Methodology: The Social Vulnerability Scale (SVS) is a 15-item informant-based questionnaire measuring 2 factors: gullibility and credulity. We administered the SVS to informants of 27 patients with bvFTD and 24 patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD). Patients were administered a moral dilemmas task to assess social-emotional processes. Informant-based behavioral measures such as the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) were also collected. We used an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to compare social vulnerability scores between groups. We also assessed the association between social vulnerability and emotional responses on moral task and empathic concern scores on the IRI.

Results: Patients with bvFTD had greater social vulnerability compared with AD. SVS factor 1 (gullibility) and factor 2 (credulity) were greater in bvFTD than AD. Moral dilemmas task and empathic concern ratings significantly predicted social vulnerability in bvFTD compared to AD.

Conclusion: Our results demonstrate that social vulnerability is increased in patients with bvFTD and relates to social-emotional processes.

Conflicts of interest

N/A