PROSPECTIVE AND RETROSPECTIVE MEMORY FAILURES IN PERSONS WITH MEMORY COMPLAINTS: A QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY

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Background: The differences between prospective memory (PM) and retrospective memory (RM) were predicted based on the assumption that PM retrieval relies heavily on self-initiated retrieval. The main purposes of this study were

1) to compare the participants' subjective frequencies of PM and RM failures and

2) to compare PM and RM failures of the participants and their caregivers.

In addition, the relations between the Korean version of Mini-Mental State Examination (K-MMSE), Global Deterioration Scale (GDS), and failures in PM and RM were examined.

Method: One hundred and fifty five participants responded. All participants and some of their caregivers answered the 16-item questionnaire. The questions came from 8 categories reflecting different aspects of memory: type, duration, and cueing. They also answered questions on the degree of discomfort caused by the participants' memory failures and the most distressful memory failure. K-MMSE and GDS were administered only to participants.

Results: More PM than RM failures were reported by the participants. The participants reported more memory failures than their caregivers when they performed PM tasks, and when there were no environmental cues. In addition, both K-MMSE and GDS scores were significantly correlated with PM and RM failures. The participants were more frustrated by their memory failures than their caregivers, and both the participants and their caregivers were more frustrated by PM failures than RM failures.

Conclusions: These results suggest that PM failure is at least as frequent as RM failure and causes more discomfort.