

Follow-on impact from memory screening in older adults attending NHS hearing aid assessment appointments: a pilot study

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1 Background

Hearing loss acquired in midlife is a significant risk factor for dementia. Memory is rarely addressed in hearing services, but many UK audiologists feel it would be useful to do so. We therefore set out to introduce a brief memory assessment in routine hearing aid appointments.

2 Aim

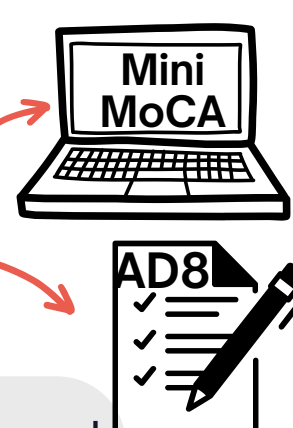
This study explores the impact of introducing a short memory assessment in routine hearing aid appointments at a community hospital in London

3 Methodology

- Pilot study based at Edgware Community Hospital
- 20 patients aged >65 years

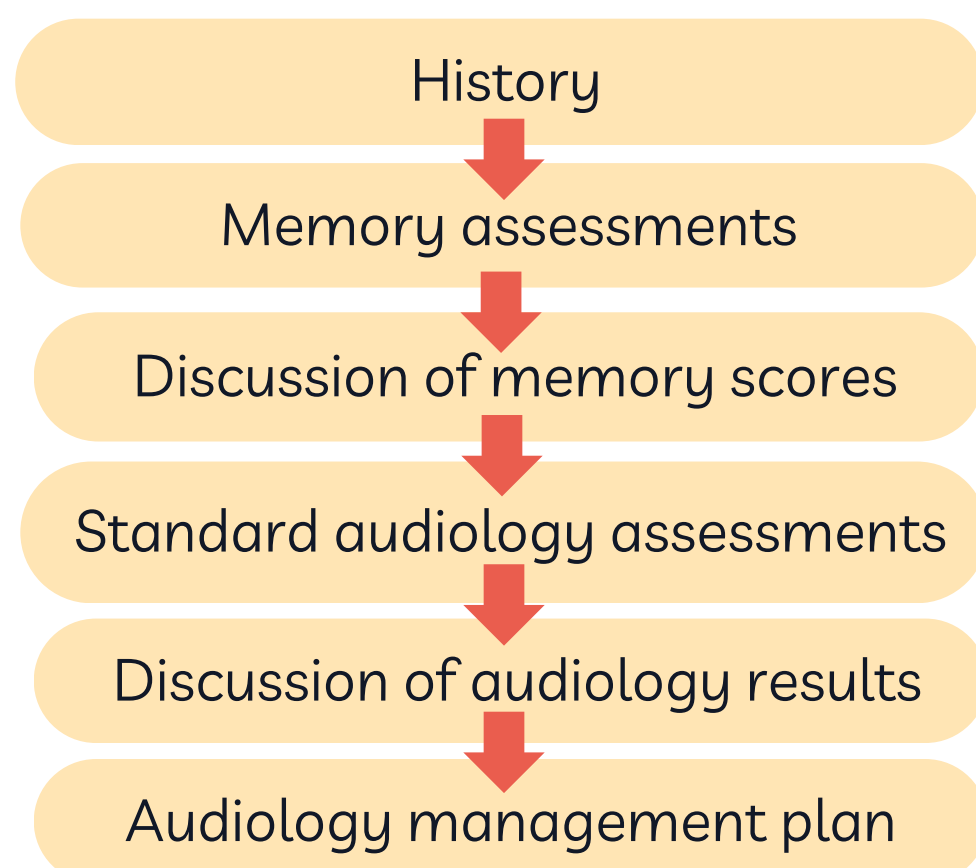
Preparation

Training for clinical audiologists to perform memory assessment



15 minutes extra time allocated

Appointment procedure



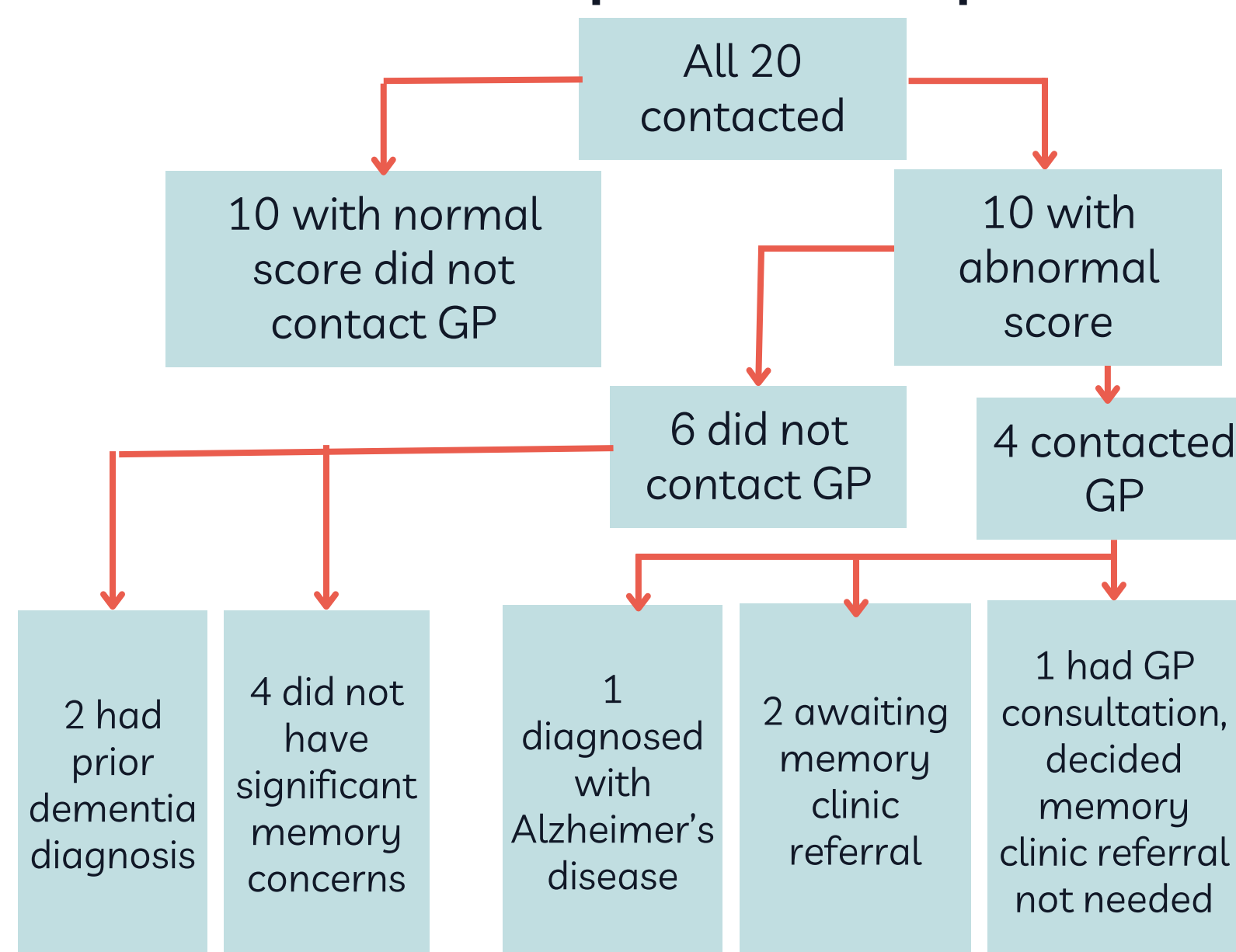
3-month follow up phone call

Impact of memory assessment

3 Results

- Median age 80 years
- 14 (70%) attended alone
- 20 (100%) completed memory assessment
- 14 minutes for memory assessment + discussion
- Training 1 hour + 1 hour self-directed learning
- 2 prior mild dementia dx
- 10 (50%) abnormal AD8 score (4 self-reported)
- 1 (5%) abnormal miniMoCA score
- 19 calm, 1 anxious during memory assessment + discussion

3-month telephone follow-up



5 Conclusions

- Half of older adults attending hearing aid clinics fail a commonly used dementia screening tool (AD8). This result may have been affected by most patients attending alone and completing the tool which is designed to be informant based.
- Identifying a potential memory problem in older adults attending hearing aid clinics may help audiologists adjust their approach to hearing aid fitting to maximise uptake.
- Memory screening in older adults attending audiology clinics has the potential for early identification of dementia, enabling early intervention and better outcomes.

References

1. Livingston G et al. Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission. The Lancet. 2020 Aug 8;396(10248):413-46.
 2. Omar R et al. Managing comorbid cognitive impairment and hearing loss in older adults: a UK survey of audiology and memory services. Age and Ageing. 2023 May 1;52(5):afad080.
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