

Title: Comparing Social Interactions of Left Brain and Right Brain Stroke Patients

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Introduction: With the increasing aging population, it is becoming important to study ailments that plague older adults. Strokes are one of the top ailments that affect this population. Scholars have often noticed a difference between left (LH) and right (RH) hemisphere stroke patients. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the difference in quality and quantity of social interactions between left and right hemisphere stroke patients.

Method: This study uses data previously gathered as part of a larger study funded by the National Institutes of Health under the direction of the faculty sponsor. Forty two stroke patients completed diaries (SNAP; Code, 2003). Within the diaries, left and right hemisphere stroke patients described social interactions occurring for one week every month for three months. This study will focus on the first month of data of 14 participants. Data will be analyzed qualitatively through the number of interactions that took place within one week and quantitatively through a five point predictability scale and classification of family network typology.

Results: Preliminary results indicate noticeable differences in quality and quantity of social interactions. With the family network typology, LH group had a majority (5/8) with a family typology with the other participants being scattered. RH group had a split between family typology (3/6), diverse typology (1/6), and neighbor typology (2/6). Left hemisphere stroke patients exhibited a high/mid predictability of schedule; whereas, RH group exhibited a primarily medium predictability of schedule. The number of interactions in a week for LH group was primarily 20+ and 10-20 for RH group.

Conclusion: This study indicates that while LH group may have more interactions per week, the quality of those interactions is less than the RH group. The LH group had a primarily family network typology, indicating that their social interactions were less satisfying and more likely to lead to depression (Bonder, 2009). The LH group had a higher predictability of schedule, which may be less satisfying. The RH group may have had fewer interactions because they felt more socially satisfied.