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Gender Differences in Persons with Dementia including Alzheimer's Disease who go Missing: Implications for Managing Dementia

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Background: Researchers are beginning to investigate the social and behavioral risk factors among persons with dementia including Alzheimer's disease. Missing persons with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias may become disoriented, injured, or the victims of foul play. Individuals with severe mental impairments at time that they go missing may severely injure or kill themselves, especially within the first 24 hours after they go missing.

Methods: The present investigation is part of the Missing Persons Project, which is based on a random sample of 998 missing-persons reports that were filed between 1991 and 2011 and published in the North American Missing Persons Network and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children websites. This study tests the null hypothesis there are no gender differences among persons with dementia including Alzheimer's disease who go missing. Each missing-persons report was coded using a 228-item protocol. The coded data were entered into a data file and Chi-Square and correlational analyses were then performed using Systat 9 for Windows program (1999).

Results: The null hypothesis was rejected. Males with dementia including Alzheimer's disease (68.3%) were more likely to go missing than females with the same mental disorder (31.61%) (Chi-square=22.81, df=1, p<.000). These results remained statistically significant after controlling for possible intervening factors.

Conclusions: These findings suggest that males with dementia including Alzheimer's disease are more likely than females with the same mental disorder to go missing. This investigation assesses the implications of these findings for enhanced mental management of demetia and the injury/death prevention.

Biography

Stephen J Morewitz completed his PhD at the age of 29 years from the University of Chicago. He is a Lecturer in the Department of Nursing and Health Sciences at the California State University, East Bay. He is an award-winning researcher with more than 100 publications, including 12 books.

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