

Towards community diagnosis of dementia: Testing cognitive impairment in older persons in Argentina, Chile and Cuba

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Extensive research into the risk factors associated with dementia, how best to diagnose this syndrome and how to help families care for dementia patients has not been undertaken in Latin American countries, where the family and government support systems differ from developed nations. In an attempt to identify the risk factors associated with dementia in the cultural context of Latin America and to assist health planners and researchers in preparing for future needs of families in an ageing society, the Pan American Health Organization undertook the first-ever study of the prevalence of dementia in Latin America. The study consisted of a cross-sectional examination of non-institutionalized individuals 60 years of age and older in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Santiago (Chile) and Havana (Cuba). The study had a two-phase research design: a screening phase for the identification of persons with cognitive impairment and a confirmation phase for diagnosis of the presence of dementia. This arti