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## A novel approach to help early identification of individuals at risk for Dementia

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Dementia is becoming a global epidemic with no known cure or prevention strategy. The pre-symptomatic course of dementia can last over a decade, offering researchers and clinicians a crucial window of opportunity to provide pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions with the potential to limit the catastrophic effects of this disease on the person's overall functioning and quality of life. Despite growing evidence suggesting that individuals at risk for dementia already face subtle but important functional declines, it is still not clear how to capture these declines in the clinical setting. This presentation will focus on the lessons learned from a series of studies that we have conducted in this topic and propose a novel approach to help early identification of individuals at risk for dementia. Our first study investigated current occupational therapists' practices regarding functional assessments in individuals with MCI. Subsequently, we have conducted a series of reviews in this topic to investigate which assessment tools have been validated with this population and what are the functional domains covered in each of these tools. In this presentation we will discuss the best available assessment tools to date and the strengths and weakness of these tools. Finally, we will present a novel investigative technique to help in the identification of the subtle functional declines in individuals at risk for dementia.

### Biography

Belchior earned her bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy from Dom Bosco Catholic University in Brazil. She completed a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Florida, Gainesville. Her postdoctoral work focused on cognitive aging and was also completed at the University of Florida, at the department of Clinical and Health Psychology. Dr. Belchior is currently an assistant professor at the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy at McGill University and she is affiliated with the Institut Universitaire de Gériatrie de Montréal. Her research program focuses on the promotion of functional autonomy in individuals at risk for dementia.

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