

The Meaning of Behaviors in Dementia / Neurocognitive Disorders: New Terminology, Classification, and Behavioral Management

By Atul Sunny Luthra

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Understanding the meaning of behaviors in Dementia / Major Neurocognitive Disorder (D/NCD) is proposed as an essential step to make substantive progress in developing pharmacological and behavioral interventions. This book encompasses the synopsis of the direction sought from behavioral and developmental psychology and dementia literature to achieve the aforementioned goal.

This book will provide a historical overview of the literature on the existing terminology and classification of behaviors in D/NCD, identification of limitations and gaps, and proposed future direction in this area of dementia care.

The first essential step in attaining this goal was to develop a comprehensive biopsychosocial model for the occurrence of behaviors in D/NCD, as all existing models are dichotomized along biological and psychosocial paradigms. The second step was identification of criteria to develop a reliable and valid classification system for this BPS model.

This process involved aggregation of individual behavioral symptoms into:

1. Clinically meaningful behavioral categories
2. Defining the meaning portrayed by each of these individual behavioral categories
3. Identification of the specification of the theoretical constructs, which justified the aggregation of individual behavioral symptoms into clinically meaningful categories

In clinical practice, identification of individual behavioral symptoms under each of the identified behavioral category will provide the clinician with a theoretical framework to ascribe the meaning or the purpose for its presence in the patient. This added understanding for the presence of behaviors should assist the clinician in developing behavioral interventions that are sustainable and affordable, thereby optimizing the use of medications.

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