



Department of Psychology Colloquium

Behavior Analysis for Neurocognitive Disorders: Improving Health, Independence, and Quality of Life

Claudia Drossel, Ph.D. Postdoctoral Fellow

University of Michigan

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Div Rehab Psych & Neuropsych

WMU Faculty Candidate



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Many individuals who have cognitive losses, due to acquired brain injuries or degenerative diseases, experience difficulties in everyday functioning and social interactions that would not be predicted based upon the neurodegenerative process alone. This excess disability is commonly a function of modifiable factors.

While the effects of modifiable factors on health, maintenance of independence, and quality of life are increasingly recognized in the general population and targeted through public health promotion and disease prevention programs (e.g., stress management, diet and exercise regimens), programs to prevent the excess disability commonly associated with neurocognitive disorders have not been adequately developed and disseminated. Behavior analysis is uniquely suited to fill this gap: The continuum of behavior analytic assessment and intervention strategies – basic, applied, and clinical – supports a unique and functional understanding of cognitive losses and associated behavioral and emotional changes and of the specific factors that potentially decrease an individual's ability to maintain participation in a variety of life domains. Behavior analysis promotes individually tailored, collaborative, and innovative treatment strategies and suggests a new vision for improving the health, independence, and quality of life of the many individuals with neurocognitive losses and the people who care about them.