

# The Mental Note

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FROM  
THE HARVARD AGING BRAIN STUDY STAFF



## THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY COMPLAINTS IN THE EARLY DETECTION OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Dear HABS participants and study partners:

We would like to invite you to our virtual Food for Thought. Dr. Rebecca Amariglio has accepted the opportunity to present a live Zoom webinar discussing her research on the importance of memory complaints.

We greatly appreciate your dedication to the Harvard Aging Brain Study. We are thinking of all of you in this time of uncertainty and hoping that everyone is staying well and comfortable at home!

STAFF AT THE HARVARD AGING BRAIN STUDY

*Care About You*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY COMPLAINTS IN THE EARLY DETECTION OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Subjective cognitive decline (SCD) refers to an individual's self-reported experience that their memory is deteriorating compared to their previous ability level, but clinicians find that they are still performing within the normal range on standardized cognitive tests.

Studies have shown that 50% to 80% of older adults report some form of perceived decline in their cognitive abilities.

People sometimes notice this change in relatively uneventful situations like remembering if they've already told someone something, not being able to think of the right word to finish a sentence or losing their train of thought in a conversation or presentation.

While memory complaints are quite common as individuals age, some changes in memory may be early harbingers of cognitive change due to a pathological process such as Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Evidence suggests that older adults reporting SCD are at a greater risk of future cognitive decline and dementia than individuals who are cognitively unimpaired and do not have SCD.

SCD can impact a person and their families in several ways, from difficulties performing everyday activities like cooking and cleaning to living with and managing disease.

SCD can also affect emotional and social functioning and overall quality of life. Reports of subjective decline are often accompanied by mild symptoms of depression or anxiety, but these symptoms are not considered to be the cause of SCD. They might occur with SCD because of a common underlying cause, or as a result of SCD itself.

Recent research has shown that older adults with SCD have an increased likelihood of having elevated levels of beta-amyloid and tau (proteins known to be associated with AD), in their brain.

This shows that biological changes related to AD pathology may underlie SCD, and that these memory complaints may become more frequent closer to the onset of objective cognitive impairment.

In her talk, Dr. Amariglio will discuss the latest research in which types of memory complaints are more reflective of normal aging and which may increase risk for future cognitive decline in older adults who are currently healthy. She will also discuss the importance of observations of a family member or friend in providing their perspective on participants in research studies.

**JOIN US** from the comfort of your own home,  
as we host the virtual

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Where Dr. Rebecca Amariglio will discuss the importance of  
memory complaints in the early detection of  
Alzheimer's disease.  
[DATE] at [TIME]



Join URL  
[URL]

For more information or for technical  
help call: [PHONE]

Dr. Rebecca Amariglio is a clinical neuropsychologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Massachusetts General Hospital and Assistant Professor in Neurology at Harvard Medical School. After completing her doctoral degree at the University of New Mexico, she trained as an intern at Yale School of Medicine and as a post-doctoral fellow at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Amariglio is a recipient of the New Investigator Research Award from the Alzheimer's Association and the Career Development Award from the National Institute on Aging.



Her work focuses on using sensitive subjective and objective cognitive tools in the early detection of Alzheimer's disease. She has worked with an international working group with the Alzheimer's Association to develop universal criteria for defining subjective memory decline in the context of Alzheimer's Disease. Dr. Amariglio is currently principal investigator of a project funded by the National Institutes of Health studying a longitudinal cohort of older individuals with memory complaints by completing cognitive assessments and several neuroimaging techniques. She is also a co-investigator on the Harvard Aging Brain Study.

**NEWSLETTER TEAM:** Praniitha Y. Premnath, Nicholas E. Stevenson, Madeline K. Kuppe, Paola Garza, Aubryn Samaroo, Colleen Fitzpatrick, Yakeel T. Quiroz, PhD

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