

# Symptoms targeted for treatment by caregivers of people with dementia and agitation

P#309

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## Background & Objectives

- Neuropsychiatric symptoms (NPS) are associated with worse quality of life and caregiver burden;<sup>1,2</sup> agitation is a especially distressing NPS.<sup>3</sup>
- We evaluated which symptoms caregivers most often selected as targets for treatment. Our objectives were to determine: **how often**, and; **at which stage of dementia**, symptoms related to NPS and agitation were most commonly monitored by respondents.

## Methods

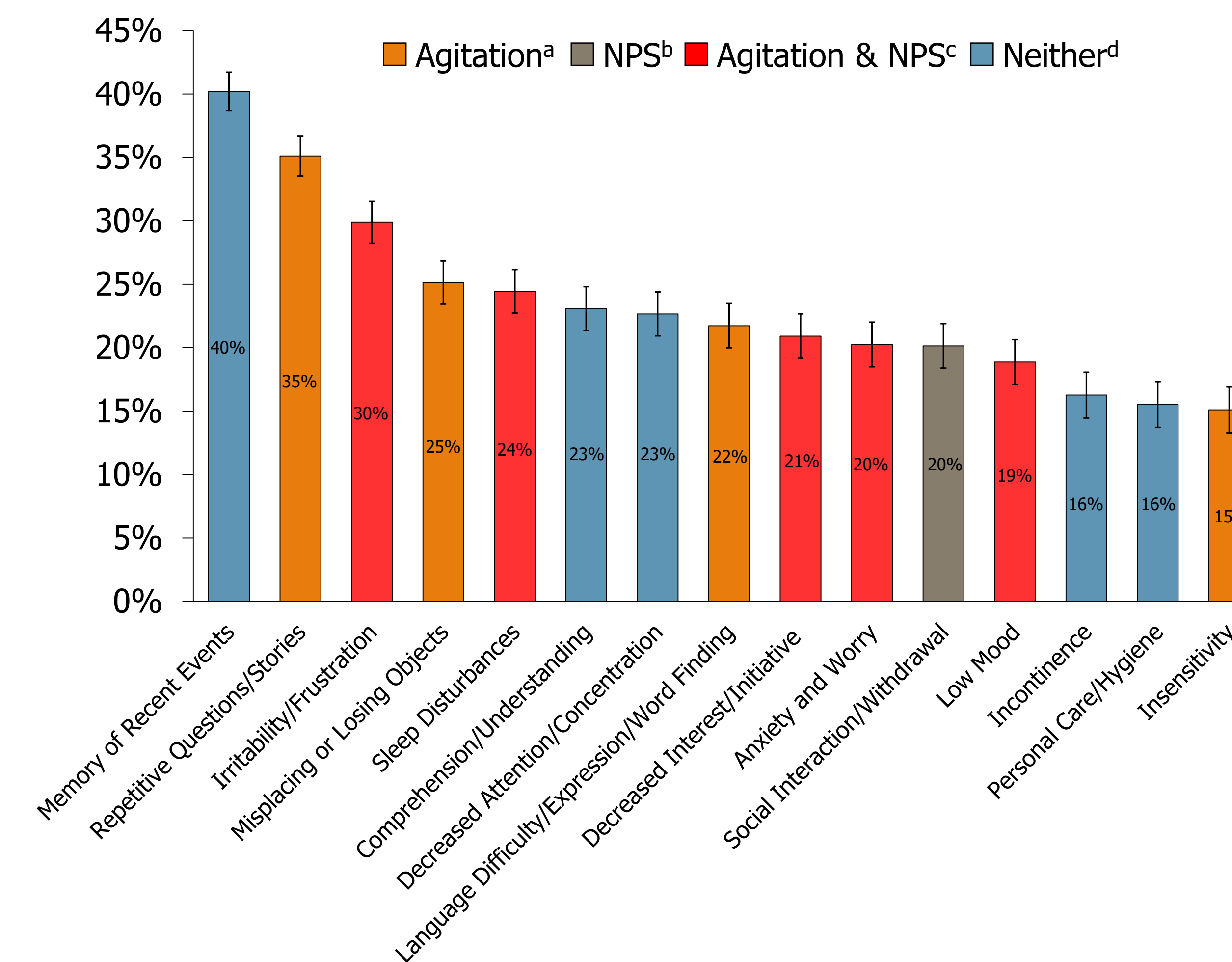
- The SymptomGuide™, [www.dementiaguide.com](http://www.dementiaguide.com), is an online database (97% caregivers, 3% patients) containing information on 61 dementia symptoms where users select those symptoms important to them for monitoring or treatment.
- NPS was defined with 15 dementia symptoms: aggression, anxiety & worry, appetite, delusions & paranoia, hallucinations, inappropriate language & behaviour, inappropriate sexual behaviour, decreased interest/initiative, irritability/frustration, low mood, obsessive behavior, restlessness, sleep disturbances, social interaction/withdrawal, and wondering.
- Agitation was defined using terms consistent with definitions from the International Psychogeriatric Association (IPA) and Neuropsychiatric Inventory-Clinician rating scale (NPI-C).<sup>4,5</sup>
- Dementia severity was staged with a validated algorithm.<sup>6</sup>
- Data were collected between May 2006 and March 2017.

## Results

- Of the 2577 site users staged by dementia severity, NPS were monitored in 83% and agitation in 74%.
- Agitation was targeted symptom for monitoring across all stages:
  - 68% mild cognitive impairment (MCI)
  - 73% mild dementia
  - 73% moderate dementia
  - 90% severe dementia
- On average, 7.7 symptoms were targeted; most often memory of recent events (40%), verbal repetition (35%) and irritability/frustration (30%) (Figure 1).
- The Pearson correlation between rank and frequency was -0.07;  $p = 1e-8$  (Figure 2).
- Note that NPS and agitation are tracked at all stages (Figure 3) and that the most common NPS tend to be the most troubling.

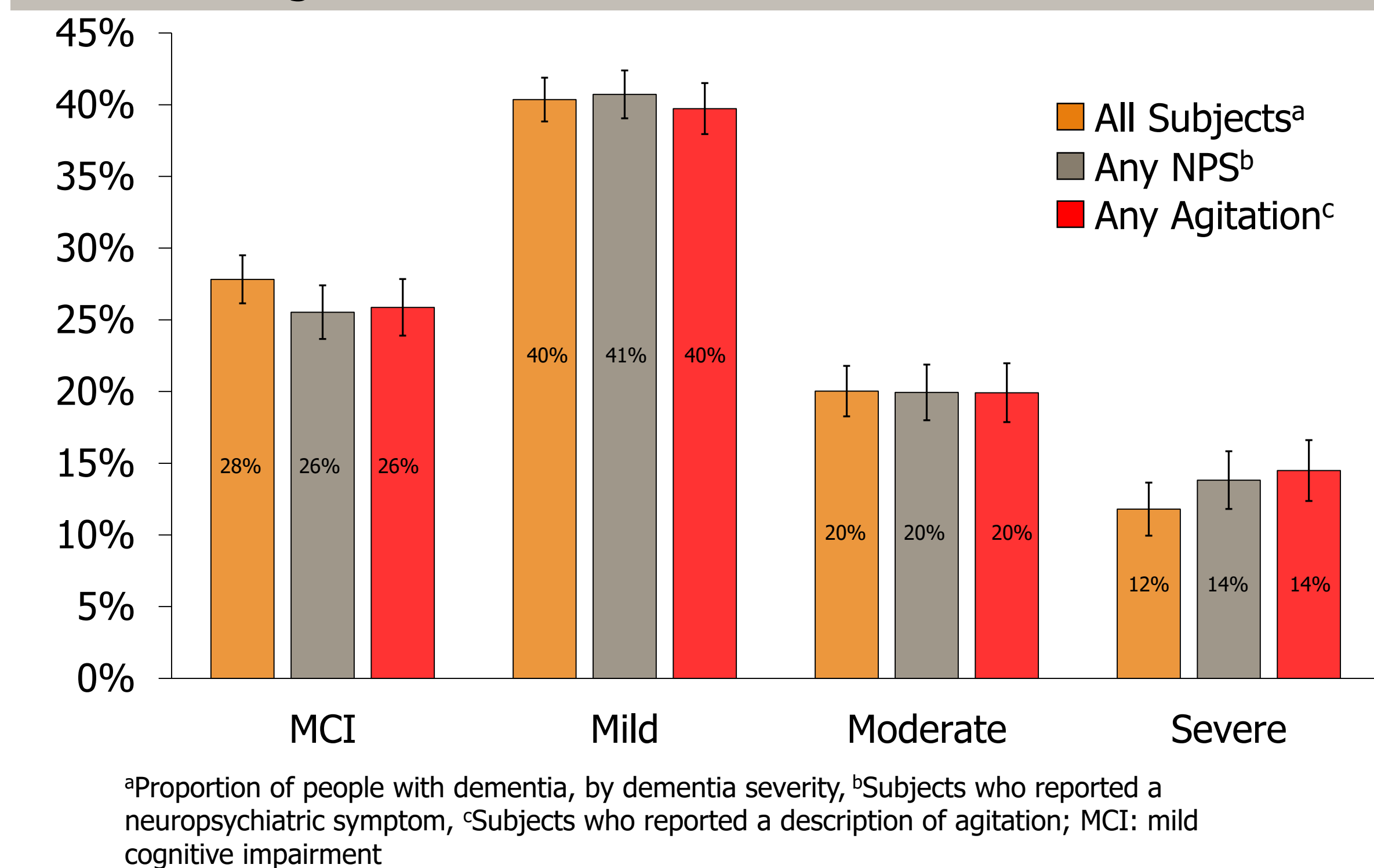
## Results

**Figure 1.** Prevalence (% of subjects) of the most frequently identified symptoms as reported by SymptomGuide™ users.



<sup>a</sup>Symptom includes a description of Agitation, <sup>b</sup>Neuropsychiatric symptom (NPS), <sup>c</sup>NPS which includes a description of agitation, <sup>d</sup>Symptom is not a NPS and does not include a description of agitation

**Figure 3.** Proportion of subjects (%) in whom neuropsychiatric symptoms (NPS) or descriptions of agitation were reported by dementia stage.



<sup>a</sup>Proportion of people with dementia, by dementia severity, <sup>b</sup>Subjects who reported a neuropsychiatric symptom, <sup>c</sup>Subjects who reported a description of agitation; MCI: mild cognitive impairment

## Conclusion

- Agitation, defined per terms consistent with the IPA and NPI-C agitation definition, was a common target for treatment across all stages.
- Apart from recent memory impairment, agitation is targeted for treatment in association with verbal repetition and irritability/frustration.
- At any stage, it is worth asking about NPS, including agitation.
- We adopted a recent, but broad definition of agitation, which is a potential limitation of the current study.

## References & Acknowledgement

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Table 1. Baseline characteristics of user population	Total (N = 2577)	NPS (N = 2127)	Agitation (N = 1898)
Age, mean (SD) years*	75.9 (12.5)	75.5 (12.6)	75.4 (12.8)
Women (%)*	63	63	63
Region (%)			
NA	89	88	87
EU	7	7	8
OCE	3	3	3
Other	1	1	2
Education ≥HS (%)*	77	76	77
Living in Care facility (%)*	13	14	14
Diagnosed (%)*	67	66	65
Alzheimer Disease (%)*	61	61	58
Symptoms Monitored, mean (SD)*	7.7 (4.7)	8.3 (4.9)	8.6 (5.0)

\*Summary of reported cases; Other regions include: Asia, Africa, and South America; Education: Highest level of education is high school (HS) diploma or higher; Living Arrangements: In a retirement home, care facility or nursing home; NPS: neuropsychiatric symptoms; NA: North America; EU: Europe; OCE: Oceania

**Figure 2.** Relationship between the most common descriptions of agitation, their daily frequency, and rank among co-occurring symptoms

