



Visual-spatial Ability in Parkinson's Disease

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Abstract

Although Parkinson's Disease (PD) is often associated with visual-spatial deficits, research findings have been inconsistent. In addition to methodological issues that potentially confound the interpretation of data in this research area, there are also pathophysiological as well as theoretical issues that need to be resolved in order to better understand these clinical findings. The primary goal of this line of research is to learn if individuals with Parkinson's Disease have deficits in visual-spatial ability. The secondary goal of this line of research is to elucidate the mechanisms that contribute to the cognitive dysfunction associated with this neurodegenerative disorder. This research will show that, in the absence of global cognitive decline, individuals with Parkinson's Disease do show deficits in visual-spatial ability. This research will show further that these visual-spatial deficits in Parkinson's Disease are not sensitive to dopamine medication, but are related, to some extent, with function in other cognitive domains. Future research will endeavour to better understand the nature of these functional relationships between different cognitive domains.

Biography

After attending the University of Houston where he attained his Bachelor's degree and Master's degrees in Behavioural Science and Business, Dr. Crucian completed his graduate training at the Chicago Medical School where he specialized in clinical neuropsychology. Dr. Crucian completing his clinical internship training at the University of Florida Health Science Centre in Gainesville, FL, and attained his PhD in Clinical Psychology in 1995. He went on to complete fellowship training in behavioural neuropsychology in the University of Florida Department of Neurology in 1998 under the mentorship of Dr. Kenneth M. Heilman, MD. He subsequently joined the clinical faculty of the UF Department of Neurology where he participated in the Memory Disorder and Movement Disorder Clinics as well as contributed to on-going research in neuropsychology. Since 2006, Dr. Crucian has been a Senior Lecturer in the University of Canterbury Department of Psychology as well as a Senior Clinical Psychologist in the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service at Burwood Hospital in Christchurch, New Zealand. Dr. Crucian's clinical activities have involved the clinical assessment of individuals with brain dysfunction resulting from traumatic injury and neurological disorders. He teaches the cognitive and neuropsychological assessment course in the Clinical Diploma program at the University of Canterbury and he serves as the primary supervisor for the clinical internship training program at Burwood Hospital. His research interests include the general area of neuropsychology and the study of brain-behaviour relationships, with a particular interest in right hemisphere function involving primarily spatial ability and emotional processing.

~~~~ All Are Welcome ~~~~~