

## ABSTRACT

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Degenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's dementia, have a profound impact on cognitive skills, memory, and language skills. Identifying a specific communication impairment occurring in early in the onset of dementia may aid in early identification and more effective management of the disease process. The purpose of the study was to measure speech perception skills and lexical retrieval skills in individuals with and without early Alzheimer's dementia (DAT). Lexical retrieval skills and speech perception skills were assessed in 5 participants with DAT and 5 age-matched healthy controls utilizing the Mini-Mental State Examination, the Arizona Battery of Communication Disorders of Dementia, the Boston Naming Test, and a gated speech perception test. It was hypothesized that there will be no significant difference in the lexical retrieval skills or speech perception skills in individuals with early DAT when compared to normal controls. Results of the study showed that the normal control group achieved higher scores on all assessments of the study compared to the DAT group. Statistics calculated from the raw scores showed that the groups differed significantly from each other in their performance on the cognitive tests and speech perception tasks. Results indicate that normally aging adults may require less auditory information to perceive and process spoken language when compared to individuals with DAT.