Proxy decision making & dementia care: exploring decision maker thinking using Construal Level Theory: A Novel Approach

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Presentation Plan

- Dementia & Proxy Decision Making: The Dilemma
- Construal Level Theory (CLT)
- The Linguistic Category Method
- Our Approach
- Initial Findings
- The Next Steps
- References
Dementia & Proxy Decision Making

What should Mr N’s daughter do?

“Mr N has been a committed vegetarian for most of his adult life. He develops Alzheimer’s disease. He lives with his daughter who is not a vegetarian. She provides him with vegetarian food, but it becomes clear that Mr N is raiding her fridge & eating the processed meats & when his daughter catches him eating meat he is doing so with obvious pleasure.”

Hope et al., 2009 p737
The Dilemma

‘then self’
Past Interests, desires & wishes
Autonomy

‘now self’
Present Interests, desires & wishes
Beneficence

Stonestreet (2014)
Beauchamp & Childress (2013)
Nys (2013)
Construal Level Theory

- Predicating
- Imagining
- Speculating
- Psychological Distance:
  ↔ Time
  ↔ Space
  ↔ Social
  ↔ Hypothetical

Liberman & Trope, 2014
Trope & Liberman, 2010
Abstract Thinking
Bigger picture
Central features
Desirability
Goals
‘why?’

Concrete Thinking
Detail
Practical concerns
Feasibility
Pragmatic
‘how?’

High Level Construal

Low Level Construal
The Linguistic Category Method

- Following lines of print
- Gaining knowledge

- Putting a key in the lock
- Securing the house

- Removing the meat from his hands
- Respecting past interests

Fujita et al., 2006
Semin & Felder, 1991
Our Approach

- Scenario
  - Story of Alan
  - Reasons for suggested action
- Interviews
  - ‘what are you thinking & feeling?’
- Thematic Analysis
- Linguistic Category Method
Participants travelled across Psychological Distance

- Try to understand perspective in past & present
- Abstract thoughts establish central values & goals
- Inform the basis for the decision
- Concrete thoughts express pragmatic concerns
- Establish the boundaries for the decision
- Use imagination to seek alternative solutions
The Next Steps

• Practical impact?
• Proxy decisions maker interests vs. interests of the person with dementia
• Might knowing about abstract & concrete thinking help?
• Can we enable decision makers to recognise this way of thinking & to maximise it?
• Does this assist nurses in giving support?
References


