



Even As Memory Fades, Emotions Linger

Finding underscores the need to treat Alzheimer's patients with dignity and respect, researchers say

TUESDAY, April 13 (HealthDay News) -- People with memory loss can still "remember" feelings associated with happy and sad experiences, a new study has found.

University of Iowa researchers showed clips of happy and sad movies to five patients with memory loss. The patients couldn't remember what they had watched, but they did retain the emotions triggered by the movie clips.

"Sadness tended to last a bit longer than happiness, but both emotions lasted well beyond [the patient's] memory of the films," lead author Justin Feinstein, a student in the graduate programs of neuroscience and psychology, said in a university news release. "With healthy people, you see feelings decay as time goes on. In two patients, the feelings didn't decay; in fact, their sadness lingered."



The findings, published in the this week's online edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, have implications for Alzheimer's disease patients, their families and caregivers.

"A simple visit or phone call from family members might have a lingering positive influence on a patient's happiness even though the patient may quickly forget the visit or phone call. On the other hand, routine neglect from staff at nursing homes may leave the patient feeling sad, frustrated and lonely even though the patient can't remember why," Feinstein said in the news release.

"What this research suggests is that we need to start setting a scientifically informed standard of care for patients with memory disorders," Feinstein added. "Here is clear evidence showing that the reasons for treating Alzheimer's patients with respect and dignity go beyond simple human morals."

More information

The U.S. National Institute on Aging has more about [memory loss](#).

-- Robert Preidt

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