

# PROSPECTIVE MEMORY ERRORS AND STRATEGY USE IN AGING – A QUALITATIVE APPROACH



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## INTRODUCTION

**Prospective memory (PM)** = The ability to carry out a delayed intention (Einstein & McDaniel, 1996)

- Increased PM errors in aging
- Strategies used to overcome errors (Hering et al., 2014)

→ Lack of qualitative studies to aid understanding of older adults' own views on strategies used to overcome everyday PM errors

## THE CURRENT STUDY

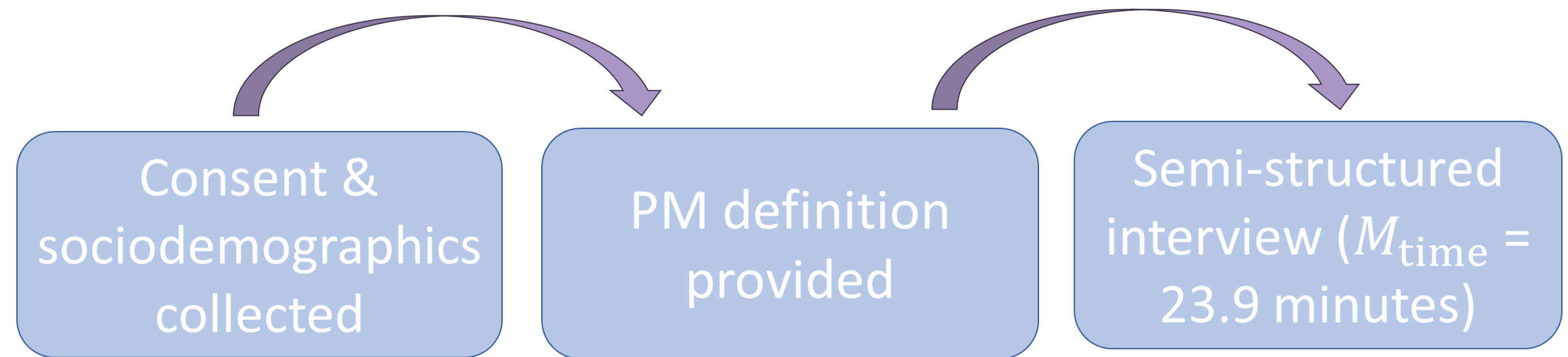
**Aim:** to extend current knowledge on PM errors and strategies used by OAs in daily life

- 1) Which PM errors are OA's most bothered by in everyday life?
- 2) Which strategies are most commonly used?
- 3) Which strategies are most and least beneficial?

## PARTICIPANTS AND DESIGN

**15 participants:** aged 55-86, (M age = 72.3), 7 female

- Self-reported healthy and independently living
- **Exclusions:** diagnosed dementia, current depression/anxiety, medications affecting memory



## ANALYTIC STRATEGY

- **Thematic analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
- Inductive, bottom-up approach driven by the data
- Two coders (main researcher + RA)
- **Contextualist epistemology:** people's words are a window to their reality

Themes	Subthemes (example)
1. Awareness of changes	Awareness of increased memory slips
2. Changing priorities and demands	Distinct difference between urgency and importance
3. Social motivation	Important to remember tasks involving other people
4. Negative emotions and self-perception	Anxiety of forgetting impacts everyday memory
5. External and internal aids	Not writing down leads to forgetting
6. Routinized and health behaviours	Routine supports everyday memory
7. Strategic behaviours	Planning ahead aids PM
8. Social support	Emphasis on helping each other remember

## DISCUSSION

Social motivation plays a significant role in PM tasks (Penningroth et al., 2011) – social tasks prioritized over health-related tasks

Meta-cognitive awareness of own errors crucial in how individuals deal with their errors

The findings highlight the importance of strategies which the OA's feel comfortable using – potential of using technological aids

"What would bother me is letting.. Forgetting something and let somebody down."  
-P11

"I am concerned about my memory because it's sluggish really. I do worry about my memory (...)" -P8

"Yes, it's using technology, I think going with the flow on that it's very good." -P3

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### Limitations:

Lack of diversity in participants' socioeconomic background and living areas

### Future studies:

Impact of social motivation on PM abilities and strategy use

## WHAT'S NEXT?

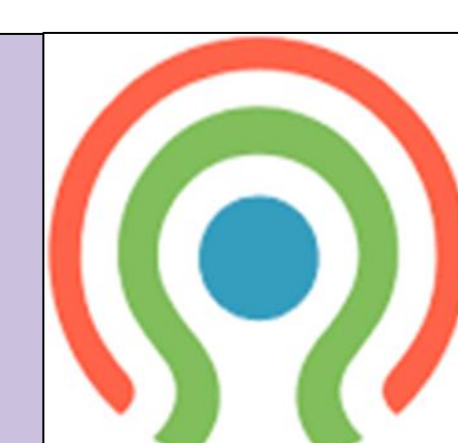
- Conducting a new interview study
- Outlining a new and improved strategy aimed at improving PM abilities in older adults.

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