Helping dementia patients

I READ AND APPRECIATED THE RECENT ARTICLE BY MARC Riachi¹ discussing various aspects of how pharmacists might improve their interaction with cognitively impaired patients, in light of his own personal experience as a caregiver. It was very timely given the increasing numbers of seniors in Canada.

I have no personal experience regarding caring for a family member with any form of dementia, but I do work in a clinic setting where many patients present with cognitive issues, and I am myself a senior citizen. I am increasingly convinced that pharmacists should do much more to provide specialty services for the elderly population in general and for cognitively impaired persons in particular, perhaps even expanding their scope of practice to include cognitive testing and subsequent referral to a family physician or geriatric specialist. One example of such a test can be found at [www.alz.org/](http://www.alz.org/documents_custom/141209-CognitiveAssessmentToo-kit-final.pdf)

[documents_custom/141209-CognitiveAssessmentToo-kit-final.pdf](http://www.alz.org/documents_custom/141209-CognitiveAssessmentToo-kit-final.pdf). With appropriate training, such a concise cognitive assessment could be administered with patient consent, perhaps as part of the annual medication review initiative. It has been my experience that pharmacists have a particularly useful linear relationship with many patients and their caregivers over time, which would be of particular value in the recording of changes in cognitive function.

—T. Bryce Miller, BSc(Pharm), RPh
Peterborough, Ontario

Reference

1. Riachi M. How pharmacists can help their dementia patients. *Can Pharm J (Ott)* 2016;149:67-9.