Ashlie Langlois Project 2 Final Draft

Introduction

Alzheimer's disease is a very widespread disease that affects not only the patient, but the family as well. This can take a toll on everyone that is involved, so it is crucial for the diagnosis to be accurate. In the following artifacts, both talk about how different factors can cause doctors to misdiagnose a different disease for Alzheimer's. Many of these misdiagnoses can cause lasting impacts on the patient, such as worsening symptoms or creating symptoms that were not originally there. Each of these artifacts explains how easy it is to misdiagnose a patient with Alzheimer's disease, and how something as simple as mixing medications can cause a person to have symptoms of the disease. It is important to understand how and why this can affect a family negatively, in hopes to stop this from continuing on in the future, or at least bring awareness to those getting diagnosed to get a second opinion.

First artifact summary

In the video "Dangerous mix of medications leads to faulty Alzheimer's diagnosis", Mrs. Betty Wallwork was taking multiple medications for multiple different issues. These medications each had a different use from treating back pain to healing a cataract operation, although none of these medications had anything to do with her cognitive ability. Though after some time, she began to show signs of cognitive impairment. She started getting agitated and forgetting things, and her doctor diagnosed her with Alzheimer's disease. She states in the video, "I was losing my temper, walking around the house in a daze. I was saying stupid things, I was having arguments with people. I was so sick I didn't know I was sick…" (Marchitelli, 2016). After her license was revoked and she was no longer able to live her normal everyday life, she set out to prove that

there was nothing wrong with her cognitively. Doctors had never even checked the medications that she had been taking, they simply just gave her an Alzheimer's test. "After spending hours online reading up on drug reactions, Wallwork realized her mix of medications wasn't improving her health, but making it worse" (Marchitelli, 2016). Doctors then realized that it was not Alzheimer's disease, but instead a reaction to the use of all of the medications combined. She made news and is now teaching others about how this misdiagnosis can happen to anyone and the use of medications has become too widespread. Doctors tend to just cover up and medicate the problem rather than actually fix what is wrong, which causes many people to overuse or become overmedicated, which can cause much greater issues than the original problem. This can cause more harm than good, including serious cognitive impairments. In this interview, Larry Chambers, a scientific adviser for the Alzheimer society of Canada, mentions in this interview that as many as 20 percent of dementia diagnoses could be caused by a mix of medications gone bad (Marchitelli, 2016). This is an extremely high number when considering that millions of people are diagnosed with dementia and Alzheimer's.

First artifact analysis

This video artifact is trying to show the effects of taking multiple prescriptions, and how it can cause symptoms to look like Alzheimer's. This video is displayed like a news report and uses a variety of different ways to convey this message and bring awareness to this issue. The video is trying to communicate to an audience that is elderly or children of aging parents so that they can be aware of what is happening. Since Alzheimer's is really only seen in middle aged or older patients, it is more directed towards an older audience to make them more aware. Typically Alzheimer's is seen in senior patients, that is, patients over the age of 65, so the use of an elderly woman makes the video more believable and allows the viewers to better relate and connect to

the message. If the video were to use a younger adult, such as a person in their 20s, it would not be believable and thus would not get the same feedback. Also, by Mrs. Wallwork being elderly, those watching can imagine the woman as being their own grandmother or elderly mother, which will allow for them to pay attention and become aware of these medical mistakes. It uses pathos as a way to make the audience connect to the patient emotionally. The goal of the video is to make the audience feel both sad for the patient, but also empowered to become aware of this situation and teach more people about the dangers of being prescribed multiple medications. Images are used such as medications and a video of the woman so that we can see her face and really connect with her. She uses personal experience to show that this can happen to anyone. By using video, we are able to see the woman's emotions and really get a grasp for how this affected her life. Patterns of this genre try to show the effects of misdiagnosis patients, and how it can alter their lives forever. It is in first person as the woman on the video is saying I or me, to show that it is not scripted, or at least does not appear to be scripted. She speaks in a general, casual tone as if she is having a conversation, which is another way of trying to make it not seem scripted. If she were to speak in a formal or medicinal manner, it would be very hard to grasp at the idea that the experience was her own, as many people do not understand medical terminology. By having her speak in a casual manner, we are able to feel as if we are the ones having the conversation with the woman, and can understand her and the message better.

Second artifact summary

In the text artifact "It's Not Always Dementia: Top 5 Misdiagnoses", the author explains the most common issues that can mask itself as Alzheimer's, causing misdiagnosis. While there are many diseases and illnesses that can mask as Alzheimer's, this article chose the top 5 most common to analyze. From mild cognitive impairment to mood disorders and alcoholism, doctors

may have a difficult time differentiating between Alzheimer's and other diseases. This is a very common occurrence, as"… researchers who studied nearly 1,000 people listed in the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center database found that 1 in 5 Alzheimer's cases may be misdiagnosed (Allen, n.d.). This is also an extremely high number when there are about 5 million people living with Alzheiemer's in America alone. Many times, people immediately assume the worst when someone begins to show signs of forgetfulness and other symptoms, so being misdiagnosed with Alzheimer's can cause much more harm than good. While doctors are trying their best to give their patients the best care, those with something such as alcohol or substance abuse can be put on Alzheimer's medications and misuse them, causing symptoms to worsen. It explains how some people may have slight cognitive impairments, but it is not Alzheimer's. It also explains other causes of memory loss, such as UTI's and other deficiencies we do not usually think about. By explaining all of these different factors that can cause cognitive impairment, those that have or are loved ones of those struggling with cognitive disorders are able to be a little less worried about it being Alzheimer's. Instead, they can get educated and begin to rule out some factors that the patient is or is not dealing with.

Second artifact analysis

Author Kelsey Allen is trying to inform the audience of what other diseases can mask themselves as Alzheimer's, and explain how they relate and can get switched around. It is an informative article that is used to help readers understand why misdiagnoses occur. The audience is those that have elderly loved ones with cognitive problems. By using a picture of a doctor and an elderly woman smiling, we can begin to read the article in a happier tone rather than a negative tone. By using text, we are able to think of how it can relate to those that we know, without being able to see someone and think of only them. Sometimes by reading words rather

than watching a video, we can focus more on what the information is trying to say, instead of get distracted by other things in the video. This is organized in a numbered list so that we can clearly see which one is the most common and separates from the text. This allows for readers to clearly see each reason for misdiagnosis, and allow for a better understanding of the text. This helps establish the logos aspect of the text, as readers can use their own logic when reading something that is better understood. It is formal tone that uses intermediate vocabular to sound professional, but not so much that ordinary people with no medical background cannot understand. Many of the readers will not have much if any medical background, so it is important to keep the text simple and able to understand so that it does not get tuned out or not understood.

Compare and contrast

Both artifacts have a similar goal: to educate the audience about how Alzheimer's disease can be misdiagnosed. The video utilizes pathos by playing into the emotions of individuals with elderly family, and in so doing, is able to convey the message of Alzheimer's being misdiagnosed. Viewers will be likely to relate the elderly woman to their own grandparent, thus making them more aware that it can happen to any elderly person, not just the woman in the video. The text artifact gives a more logos approach, and uses logic as a way to pass the message to the reader. By using mostly factual evidence, the reader can trust that the article has accurate information, and use that information to educate others on this topic as well. The video keeps the wording casual so that it is better understood by ordinary people. The article uses more professional wording, but uses simple words in a sophisticated manner, you are able to really understand what is happening to these patients, even if you have no medical background. Both articles work to make watchers and readers aware of just how easy it is to be misdiagnosed with Alzheimer's, attempts to keep people aware that it could happen to anyone.

Sources

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