



May 2025: Mental Health Month: Dementia and Farmers

When: Wed. May 21, 12:00 - 1:30 pm Central Time

Where: Zoom Meeting ID: 919 7485 9129, Passcode: Core2025

<https://uiowa.zoom.us/j/91974859129?pwd=oSNdNhrcSi4JRvAbQru37spMCMaX8K.1>

Objective:

Since May is Mental Health Month, we want to provide our Academy members with some new information on dementia and farmers. Recent studies have identified that older agricultural workers experience 46% greater odds of developing dementia relative to sociodemographically similar peers in other lifetime occupations. Given the presence of numerous hazards in agricultural settings and the slow progression of dementia symptoms, there may be increased safety risk to persons with dementia who work or have access to a farm. This month, our speakers will provide an update on surveillance information regarding farmer dementia, identify risk factors beyond simply “cognitive decline” that may influence on-farm safety, and identify tools and programs available to help caregivers of farmers/farm family members experiencing the stages of dementia.

At the end of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Understand the impacts that a family member with dementia can have on farm operations
- Identify specific dementia-related changes that may result in specific injury risk factors and how to prevent them
- Identify resources available for dementia caregivers of farm family members

Agenda:

Speaker	Contact Info
Kanika Arora	kanika-arora@uiowa.edu
Julie Bobitt	jbobbitt@uic.edu

Drs. Arora and Bobitt are both involved in a NIOSH-funded project that is developing and testing tools to improve [Farm Safety for Rural Families Coping with Dementia](#).

Discussion Questions:

- How were you impacted by someone close to you who has experienced dementia?
- Can traditional “home” improvements be applied to make a farm “dementia friendly”?
- What safety concerns do you now have for someone on the farm who may be experiencing dementia?

Speaker Bios:

Kanika Arora is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Management and Policy at the



University of Iowa. Her research focuses on gerontology with a special emphasis on informal caregiving, cannabis use among older adults, end-of-life outcomes, and Alzheimer's Disease and dementia. She has examined the effect of several policies and programs, including paid family leave, managed care, and consolidation of state area agencies on aging, on older adult and caregiver outcomes. Her recent work examines dementia prevalence and trajectories of cognitive functioning among agricultural workers, outcomes among senior and disabled individuals under Medicaid managed care, and the effect of a dementia

onset on change in risky behaviors (such as smoking and alcohol use) among older adults. She is collaborating with Dr. Bobitt on a 4-year project examining the relationship between farm safety and caregivers to farmers coping with dementia

Julie Bobitt is a faculty member at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Her research methods



include qualitative methods and developing, implementing, and evaluating community-based interventions focused on older adults and persons with dementia. She is collaborating with Dr. Arora on a 4-year project examining the relationship between farm safety and caregivers to farmers coping with dementia.

Stay tuned for upcoming topics:

June: Agrotourism

July: Equipment Safety