Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Master of Science of

TOMIKO YONEDA

BA (University of Victoria, 2013)

“Trajectories of Personality Preceding Dementia Diagnosis: A Coordinated Analysis”

Department of Psychology

Wednesday, August 12, 2015
1:00PM
Cornett Building
Room B316

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Andrea Piccinin, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Ryan Rhodes, School of Exercise Science, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Debra Sheets, School of Nursing, University of Victoria

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Stan Dosso, School of Earth and Social Sciences, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Background: Several retrospective studies using informant report have shown that individuals with dementia demonstrate considerable personality change. Two prospective studies have shown that individuals who develop dementia show some personality changes prior to diagnosis, also using informant report (Balsis et al, 2005; Smith-Gamble et al 2001). The current study is the first to examine trajectories of personality traits using self-report personality assessment prior to dementia diagnosis.

Methods: This study used data from two longitudinal studies of older adults (Total N = 254). Latent growth curve modelling was used to examine rates of change in each personality trait preceding dementia diagnosis.

Results: Controlling for sex, age, education, the interaction between age and education, and depressive symptoms, growth curve analyses revealed a linear increase in self-reported neuroticism for both datasets. Individuals who converted to dementia showed a significant increase in neuroticism preceding diagnosis of dementia.

Conclusions: Personality change, specifically an increase in neuroticism, may be an early indicator of dementia. Identification of a consistent longitudinal pattern of personality change may facilitate development of screening assessments, and aid in early care strategies and planning.