Facilitating participation in a disintegrating world
- enhancing communication for people with dementia

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In health and social care contexts also cognitively impaired persons need to make vital decisions between treatment opportunities and life changes, e.g. acceptance of help or moving to a nursing home. During a dementia disease all cognitive domains, including language, will decline and thus aggravate the person’s ability to engage in conversations and express their views. The demented person’s impaired communicative capacity reduces the interlocutor’s possibility to understand the view of the demented person and thereby increase distress. Previous research has shown that cognitive impairment renders difficulties in understanding what possible risks and benefits different courses of action have. This includes reduced ability to give an informed consent for a clinical trial. It is a challenge in health care to give the best possible care regarding communication difficulties. One important thing is to help the patients expressing their views regarding decisions about their own person. Another is to make sure no patients are included or excluded from clinical trials due to limited communication skills. The purpose of this PhD project is:

- to evaluate two ways (one by supporting a conversation with a picture-method, one by making texts easily readable) for enhancing the demented person’s ability to understand a situation, make a decision and also to enable the patient to express his or hers views in a intelligible way

- to develop and validate a clinical applicable test which addresses a patient’s medical decision-making capacity