

Daniela Costardi graduated from the University of Padua, Italy (BA in 2002 - thesis title: “The SNARC effect: an instance of the Simon effect?”, Advisors: C.A. Umiltà and D. Mapelli, MA in Neuropsychology of Acquired Cognitive Disorders in 2004; thesis title: “A Prospective Study of Older adults affected by Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)”, Advisors: C.A. Umiltà and P. Bisiacchi). She also obtained her Psychotherapy degree from the same University in 2008. She completed a research fellowship through the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center at Washington University in St. Louis, MO - director Dr. John C. Morris. During this time, she worked with Dr. Denise Head, investigating the structural correlates of cognitive aging and developing a computer program to investigate executive functions (attentional switching and working memory) in normal aging and the early stages of dementia. The program has the potential to be implemented in cognitive rehabilitation with older adults who present subjective memory complaints and with patients meeting the clinical criteria for Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI).

Dr. Costardi is currently involved in dementia research with the Scientific Institute of Research and Care (IRCCS) *Centro S. Giovanni di Dio – FBF, Brescia*. Her research focuses on the topics of the early detection of Early Alzheimer's & Non-Alzheimer's Prodromal Dementia and--as Case Manager for outpatients with cognitive complaints, from first neurological examination until diagnostic definition--disclosure of diagnosis to patients and caregivers. In particular, she is interested in identifying patients’ and caregivers’ clinical-emotional-cognitive characteristics and strategies upon exposure to bad news and the effects of a counselling program to support the diagnosis process.

Other related research interests include: 1) comprehension of informed consent in persons affected with dementia, for their clinical trial involvement and related ethical and practical issues, and 2) the effect of memantine treatment on brain function and morphological structure in patients with moderate to severe Alzheimer’s disease, using structural and functional magnetic resonance imaging.