Background/Aims Subjects with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) constitute a risk population of developing dementia and thus a population of clinical interest. This study reviews recent work on the incidence of MCI in the elderly.

Methods Incidence papers were identified by a systematic literature search. Studies on incidence of MCI were considered if they identified 'cognitively mild impaired' subjects by application of the MCI criteria, used the 'person-years-at-risk' method, and were based on population-based or community-based samples.

Results Nine studies were identified. Incidence of Amnestic MCI subtypes ranged between 9.9 and 40.6 per 1000 person-years, and incidence of Non-amnestic MCI subtypes was found to be 25 and 36.5 per 1000 person-years. Regarding any MCI, incidence rates of 51 and 76.8 per 1000 person-years have been found. A higher risk of incident MCI mainly was found for higher age, lower education and hypertension.

Discussion Incidence rates of MCI varied widely, and possible risk factors for incident MCI were analysed only to a limited extent. Findings call for an agreement concerning the criteria used for MCI and the operationalisation of these criteria.

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REFERENCE