

The Memory Practice Newsletter

Issue 29, July 2009



In this issue Dr. Michelon tells you about **the tests used to detect cognitive decline.**

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A new, short, test to detect Alzheimer's.

One of the most widely used tests to detect Alzheimer's Disease is the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE). A recent study challenges the use of this test and offers a new one: A self-administered test called "Test Your Memory" (TYM).

The Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE)

This test is administered by a clinician and takes on average 8mn.

The maximum score is 30. A score of 23 or lower is indicative of cognitive impairment.

The test was created in 1975 and has been validated many times as a good tool to differentiate between people with and without cognitive impairment.

The MMSE tests five areas of cognitive function:

Orientation: What is the year, season, date, etc.? Where are we (state, country, etc.)?

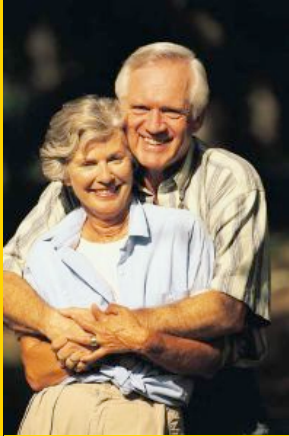
Registration and Recall: Remember the name of 3 objects, immediately and after a delay.

Attention and calculation: Count backward by 7 (or spell backward).

Language: Name objects, repeat a sentence, read and obey a sentence, write a sentence, copy a complex drawing.

Critics of the MMSE

- The MMSE has to be administered by a clinician and 8mn (+ scoring) is long given the limited length of visits nowadays.
- The MMSE has only one task testing visual and spatial abilities.
- The language and memory tasks may be too easy.



At The Memory Practice we develop brain exercises to help adults boost their memory and keep their brain fit.

Our paper-and-pencil exercises target all brain functions including memory. They are stimulating and fun.

With our Home Program **brain exercises are sent directly to your home.**

Contact us to set up a **FREE assessment** for your client, your loved one or for yourself!

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The "Test Your Memory" test (TYM)

The TYM is a new tool recently published by a team of doctors and researchers from Cambridge, U.K. The test is filled in by the patient and can be scored by nurses after a 10mn training. Completion takes on average 5mn for normal controls.

In the study the TYM was given to 540 normal individuals (controls) aged 18 to 95 and 94 patients with Alzheimer's Disease.

The TYM includes a series of 10 tasks (the 11th task is the patient's ability to complete the test):

- Orientation
- Ability to copy a sentence
- Semantic knowledge
- Calculation
- Verbal fluency
- Similarities
- Naming
- Visuospatial abilities (2 tasks)
- Recall of a copied sentence

There is a total of 50 possible points. A score of 42 or lower is indicative of cognitive impairment.

In the 2009 study, the TYM was more sensitive in detecting Alzheimer's patients than the MMSE, detecting 93% of the patients tested compared with 52% for the MMSE.

This is a promising result! As the TYM tests more abilities than the MMSE, is shorter, self-administered, and seems to be more sensitive in detecting cognitive impairment, it may be the test that everybody will use in the near future... Further testing and an American version are yet to be done!

References

- Brown, J., Pengas, G., Dawson, K., Brown, L. A., & Clatworthy, P. (2009). Self-administered cognitive screening test (TYM) for detection of Alzheimer's Disease: *Cross sectional study. BMJ, 338*, b2030.