

Testing the testers: survey of medical trainees' knowledge of the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA)

Authors: Dr Helen Lee and Dr Adam Whyte

Contributor: Dr Brian Murray (consultant - Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust)

Aims:

To investigate how accurately trainees score the MoCA

To investigate the effect of training on the accuracy of scoring a MoCA.

Background:

The Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) has become the standard cognitive screening test for mild cognitive impairment and dementia in psychiatric and other medical settings around the world. However, medical trainee doctors typically administer and score the MoCA with minimal tuition.

Methods:

We showed a video of a 'mock' MoCA to trainees in a psychiatric teaching hospital and asked them to score the performance of the 'patient' (AW, HL, BM). We analysed the accuracy of the scoring among 16 trainees. This task was repeated several months later in 14 trainees after the group had received feedback and a brief tutorial on MoCA administration and scoring (AW, BM).

Results:

The "correct" score for the mock patient was 20/30. In the initial group the range of scores was 18 to 25 with a mean of 21.4 and standard deviation of 1.73.

Several months later and following a training session the range was 19 to 25 with a mean score of 20.6 and a standard deviation of 1.49.

Conclusions:

There was a significant degree of variation in accuracy of scoring of the MoCA between trainees. Trainees and supervisors should not take knowledge of the MoCA for granted. There was an improvement of performance following training. Giving feedback on a 'mock' MoCA interview appears to be effective in improving trainees' knowledge. We advise training is provided before trainees administer the MOCA to patients in a clinical setting.