MINI-COG

BACKGROUND

The Mini-Cog is an assessment instrument for cognitive impairment that combines a 3-item recall test with a clock-drawing test (CDT). The Mini-Cog can be administered in about 3 minutes, requires no special equipment, and is relatively uninfluenced by level of education or language variations. The Mini-Cog is able to screen for both impairments in memory and executive function. When used to detect dementia in community dwelling older adults, the Mini-Cog displays excellent sensitivity (.99) and good specificity (.93).

In the Mini-Cog, the patient is told three items and is asked to repeat back and remember those three items. The patient is then asked to draw a clock face with all of the numbers, and then draw in the hands of the clock to indicate a certain time. After the patient has drawn the clock face, he or she is asked to repeat back the three items that were previously stated.

INSTRUCTIONS

Say to patient:

I am going to name three items. I want you to listen carefully, and when I am finished, please repeat those items back to me.

Read list to patient. If you have already used list A, for instance as part of the MMSE, list B should be read.

A: Apple, Penny, Table
   -OR-
B: Chair, Fish, Shoe

(if correctly repeated back). Good. Now remember those three items – I will ask you to recall them later.

I would now like for you to draw in the numbers on a clock face. Draw hands on the clock so that the time reads 10 minutes past 11.

(after patient finishes clock). Now, what were the three items that I asked you to remember earlier?

Record the number of items correctly recalled.
SCORING

The test is scored as follows:
Recall of 0 items indicates cognitive impairment.
Recall of 1-2 items with an abnormal clock face indicates cognitive impairment.
Recall of 1-2 items with a normal clock face indicates no cognitive impairment.
Recall of all 3 items indicates no cognitive impairment.

Note that the clock face only comes into play when 1 or 2 items are recalled. If zero items or 3 items are recalled, the diagnosis is clear-cut. The clock face is considered normal if all numbers are present in the correct sequence and position, and the hands readably display the requested time.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- Should the patient use a pencil or pen? Pencil is preferred. The patient is allowed to correct their own mistakes and thus should use a pencil with eraser or an erasable pen.
- May I repeat the instructions? You may repeat the instructions as many times as the patient likes, BEFORE they begin the task. Once the patient begins drawing, you may not repeat the instructions, nor tell the patient what time the clock should to.
- What if the patient asks me for additional information? You cannot provide any additional information. Again, you may repeat the instructions prior to commencement of the task, however no other information should be provided.

References