



Cognitive function:

Exam to assess mental status



A number of tests can assess cognitive impairment. More than one test conducted by health care providers should always be used for a more accurate result. A common one used is called “Mini-Mental State Examination.” It was written by M.S. Folstein, S.E. Folstein, and P.R. McHugh. Adapted from this examination are the questions that follow.

QUESTIONS & TASKS	SCORE
1. These questions test for orientation to time and place. Give 1 point for each correct answer. - What year is it? - What season is it? - What is today's date? - What day is it? - What month is it? - What state are you in? - What country are you in? - What city or town are you in? - What place (home, building, etc.) are you in? - What room are you in or what floor are you on in this place?	___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1
2. This part tests instant recall. (These things will be asked to be recalled later.) Give 1 point for each object named. Name 3 objects (e.g. apple, table, dime.) Take 1 second to name each object. Have the person repeat the 3 objects named.	___ out of 3
3. This part of the exam tests for attention and calculation skills. Give 1 point for each correct answer. - Count backwards from the number 100 by 7s. Do this for 5 numbers. (Answer: 93, 86, 79, 72, and 65.) - Another option is to spell the word WORLD backwards. (Answer: D L R O W.)	___ out of 5
4. This part tests for recall. Give 1 point for each object named. Ask for the 3 objects stated in step 2 (i.e., apple, table, dime).	___ out of 3
5. This part tests for language skills. Give 1 point for each correct answer. - Point to a pencil or pen. Ask the person to name it. - Point to a wristwatch or clock. Ask the person to name it. - Ask the person to repeat this phrase “No ifs, ands, or buts”. - Ask the person to do these 3 things: - Take a piece of paper in your right hand. - Fold the paper in half. - Put the paper on the floor. - Write CLOSE YOUR EYES in large letters on a piece of paper. - Ask the person to read the phrase and to do what it says. - Give the person a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. Tell him or her to write a sentence with a subject and an object. It's okay if words are not spelled correctly. - Give this design on a piece of paper to the person. Tell the person to copy it on the same piece of paper.	___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1 ___ out of 1
TOTAL:	___ out of 30
In general, a score of 24 or less for persons with 12 or more years of schooling and 20 or less for persons with 4 or fewer years of schooling may mean a cognitive problem. Check, though, with a health care provider. A more complete assessment would likely be done to check for cognitive impairment and dementia.	