IMH Research News

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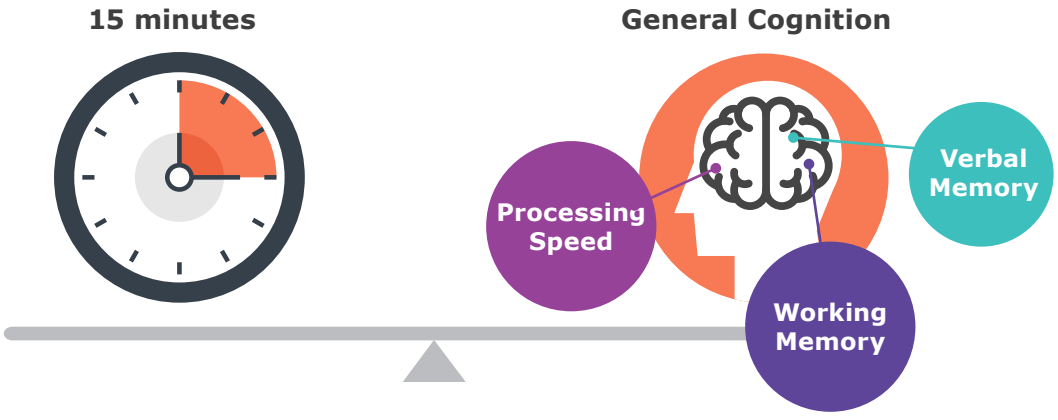
Establishing the Brief Assessment of Cognition - Short form



Cognitive performance has been shown to be an important construct relating to neuropsychiatric and various health outcomes, including mortality. Although the need for cognitive evaluation being directly accessible to the scientific and clinical community is increasing, it is still not routinely assessed. This may be due to the lengthy assessment time required by most traditional neuropsychological batteries. While comprehensive cognitive assessments might be necessary to evaluate multiple cognitive constructs, quick and brief batteries have been shown to be sufficient estimates of general cognitive function. The present study sought to identify such a brief cognitive battery.

Data from studies that administered the Brief Assessment of Cognition in Schizophrenia (BACS) among healthy and psychiatric samples in Singapore and US were analyzed. We aim to identify and validate three of the six subtests from BACS that best represent general cognitive function (indexed by the full BACS composite score). The shortened battery comprising the three selected subtests is named the BAC-Short Form (BAC-SF).

The three subtests found to best summarize general cognitive function were Verbal Memory, Digit Sequencing and Symbol Coding. BAC-SF was strongly associated with the full BACS composite ($r = 0.91$). Additionally, BAC-SF exhibited adequate test re-test reliability (Intraclass Correlation Coefficient = 0.73) and a sufficient level of accuracy in discriminating case-control status of the subjects (Average Predictive Accuracy = 79.9%).

In conclusion, the BAC-SF provides a sufficient estimate of general cognitive function in both healthy controls and schizophrenia patients. This tool assesses a variety of cognitive domains (Verbal memory, working memory, processing speed) and is straightforward in its administration. The BAC-SF takes 15 minutes to administer and does not require much additional time for post-scoring. Given the reduced administration time, minimal training demands, as well as its demonstrated validity and reliability, the BAC-SF is well positioned to serve clinicians who wish to quickly assess general cognition among patients. Brief batteries like the BAC-SF would also be an asset to cognitive researchers looking at large-scale studies and whose interest goes beyond neurocognition.

More information about the study can be found at: ***http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022395616307312***

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Positive Mental Health (PMH) among IMH staff

The concept and interpretation of positive mental health (PMH) is not unanimous as it can vary in terms of place, culture and context. Broadly speaking, PMH is a combination of emotional, psychological and social well-being that is necessary for an individual to be considered mentally healthy. As part of an earlier study, the PMH instrument was developed and validated locally to assess the level of PMH amongst Singapore's multi-ethnic adult population. The PMH instrument consists of six domains; general coping, emotional support, spirituality, interpersonal skills, personal growth and autonomy and global affect.

Promoting mental health among employees can result in improvements in organizational health. Studies have found that employees with low levels of well-being are more likely to leave their organisation as a result of job dissatisfaction, while positive correlations between well-being and performance have also been observed, however less is known about PMH amongst mental health professionals in Singapore.

This study aimed to examine the socio-demographic differences and identify correlates for domain specific and overall PMH among doctors, nurses and allied health staff, working at IMH. The study also aimed to explore the association between job satisfaction and overall PMH.

Staff were invited to participate in the online survey, via email. The survey itself collected socio-demographic information and also included the 47-item PMH instrument and a single item job satisfaction question. The sample (n=462) comprised 58 doctors, 201 nurses and 203 allied health staff. Results revealed there were a number of socio-demographic correlates of PMH total and domain specific scores, including age, gender, ethnicity, marital and residency status as well as position held by the staff and the number of years of service at IMH. Results also revealed that job satisfaction was significantly associated with total PMH.

This study has highlighted important differences in PMH by socio-demographic characteristics, and the important correlation between PMH and job satisfaction. In order to promote and foster PMH, workplaces need to consider the importance of psychosocial well-being and the mental health wellness of staff whilst providing policies, facilities, and an environment that support and maintain overall health and work efficiency. The workplace is a key environment that affects the mental health and well-being of working adults and therefore interventions to enhance well-being are recommended. Key components of PMH such as general coping and personal growth and autonomy are particularly important in the workplace given the complexities associated with working in the healthcare sector and therefore providing opportunities to build and strengthen these attributes or skills would be beneficial to individual staff and organisations as a whole.

More information about the study can be found at: ***http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0178359***

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