(P01) COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: A CLINICAL APPROACH
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**Background:** Cognitive impairment has been reported in the literature to affect as many as 40% to 70% of people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) yet often goes undiagnosed and therefore untreated. It has been difficult to reliably measure cognitive function in clinical practice settings because of time and resource constraints. Health-care professionals involved in MS care have an opportunity to establish standards of best practice for those symptoms that have a profound impact on patients’ lives. Integrating standardized assessment programs for these symptoms, which are often invisible, will result in measurable, positive outcomes for people with MS. **Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to develop an assessment program for MS-related cognitive impairment that is reliable, practical, and cost-effective, through which decreases in cognitive function would be easily identified, leading to more timely and effective treatment. **Methods:** Approval for the study was obtained from the institutional review boards of Stony Brook and Winthrop University Hospitals. Fifty-six patients presenting for follow-up visits in the MS Treatment Centers of Stony Brook and Winthrop University Hospitals consented to participate in this study examining cognitive assessment strategies. A pre-assessment questionnaire and the Multiple Sclerosis Neuropsychological Questionnaire were completed to determine patients’ perceived level of cognitive impairment. The Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test (RAVLT), the Symbol Digit Modalities Test (SDMT), and the NeuroTrax Mindstreams Computerized Cognitive Battery (MCCB) were administered. A short depression scale (Patient Health Questionnaire–9 [PHQ-9]) was also completed; however, the presence of depression did not exclude participants from the study. **Results:** Significant correlations were found between the paper-based and computer-based assessment tools (SDMT and MCCB, \( P = .0004 \); RAVLT and MCCB, \( P = .0188 \)). Participants and clinicians reported cognitive impairment as an important component of MS requiring assessment and treatment. **Conclusions:** The results of this study demonstrate that reliable, practical, and cost-effective cognitive assessment tools can be integrated into routine clinical settings involved in MS care.

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