

MoCA versus MMSE – The screening tools of cognitive decline

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The mild cognitive impairment (MCI) can be considered as an intermediate stage between normal cognitive aging and dementia. The symptoms can get by themselves by the majority of the patients but in other cases dementia can evolve in 15-20% frequency, hence the early detection and curing of MCI are extremely important. The most widely used screening tools for both dementia and MCI is the Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE), which is often criticized for its poor screening sensitivity of mild dementia and MCI. To eliminate this problem, the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) – which is not used in Hungary yet – was developed, especially for screening MCI. Likewise MMSE, the MoCA consists of maximum 30 points but the number of its examined modules is higher than in MMSE.

Our study examined 23 healthy, 24 MCI and 17 demented elderly participants, and we used action fluency test, counting span test and Beck Depression Inventory besides MMSE and MoCA. The MMSE had a sensitivity of 47,83% to screen MCI while the MoCA detected it in 60,87%; the specificity was 75% in case of MMSE and 77,5% in case of MoCA. According to the cognitive decline the performance of the groups differed significantly from each other in all the task types and tests, and the results of the tests also correlated with each other.

Our further research we would like to get closer to the more and more widely used application of the MoCA test by increasing the number of subjects.

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