Methodological and cross-cultural barriers of neuropsychological assessment in a refugee population

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Neurological Conditions

- Traumatic brain injury
- Stroke
- Age related cognitive decline
- Dementia
- Developmental difficulties
- Strengths & weaknesses
Neuropsychological Assessment

• Attention
• Learning & Memory
• Language
• Motor Function
• Information Processing Speed
• Visual perception/Construction
• Reasoning & Higher executive function
• Mood & Social Functioning
Cross Cultural Neuropsychology

- CALD (culturally & linguistically diverse)
- Hispanic / African American
  - Puente
  - Ardila
- National Academy of Neuropsychology Guidelines use of Interpreters, (Heilbronner, 2007)
Refugees

- 16 million worldwide (UN, 2009)
- 20-100% experience torture (Mollica, Henderson & Tor, 2002)
- Impaired cognitive functioning (Vasterling & Field, 2007)
The Current Study

• 18 participants (13 male/6 female)
• Nationality (Burma 7; Middle East 8; Africa 5)
• Age 25-60 (most [8] 35-40)
• Education (0 yrs = 2; 1-4yrs = 6; 4-8 yrs = 9)
Additional Factors

• Choice of tests
  – All professionally translated

• Time
  – To establish rapport
  – Flexibility to complete
  – To meet with counselors/family members

• Innovation
  – Stroop test
Results

• Administration
  – Challenges due to use of interpreters
  – Interaction with the researcher
  – Communication during testing
  – Motivation
  – Literacy
Results

• **Scoring**
  – Age appropriate scoring
  – Inferring pre-morbid functioning
  – Assessing presence of brain injury & other insults
  – Collateral Information
Results

• Specific Measures
  – Verbal
    • Wechsler Memory Scale IV –
      – Logical Memory (Story 1 - Anna Thompson)
    • Auditory Verbal Learning Test –AVLT
    • Patient Competency Rating Scale
  – Non Verbal
    • WAIS IV- Block design
    • Delis Kaplan Executive Function Scale (DKEFS)
      – Color Word Test
      – 20 Questions
Results

• Ecological Validity
Conclusions

• Assessment people who are CALD may be invalid due to
  – Different communication styles
  – Unfamiliar/inappropriate content
  – Lack of prior experience with testing
  – Lack of educational opportunity
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