Methodological and cross-cultural barriers of neuropsychological asessment 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