

Figure 3-5: Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE)

The MMSE is one of the most frequently used neuropsychological tests in the clinical evaluation of mental status changes. It is a sensitive indicator of cognitive impairment but is not specific for the diagnosis of delirium or dementia. Cognitive impairment is a component of delirium and dementia, and in HIV infection both delirium and dementia can occur. Delirium is especially common in the palliative care setting.

This tool has been used as an initial screen to alert clinicians to the possibility of cognitive impairment and to monitor this condition. The MMSE is provider-administered and usually takes five to 10 minutes to complete. A score of 23 or less generally has been considered the cut-off for cognitive impairment; however, it is important to note that a child's educational level and language ability can affect the usefulness of MMSE scores and cut-off scores.

MMSE Sample Items

Orientation to Time

“What is the date?”

Registration

“Listen carefully, I am going to say three words.
You say them back after I stop.

Ready? Here they are

HOUSE (pause), CAR (pause), LAKE (pause).
Now repeat those words back to me.”

[Repeat up to 5 times, but score only the first trial.]

Naming

“What is this?” [Point to a pencil or pen.]

Reading

“Please read this and do what it says.”
[Show examinee the words on the stimulus form:

CLOSE YOUR EYES.]

©1975, 1998, 2001 by MiniMental, LLC. All rights reserved. Published 2001 by Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. May not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form or by any means without written permission of Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc., P.O. Box 998, Odessa, FL 33556. The complete MMSE can be purchased from PAR, Inc., by calling (800) 331-8378 or (813) 968-3003.

Source: Reproduced by special permission of the Publisher, Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc., 16204 North Florida Avenue, Lutz, Florida 33549, from the MiniMental State Examination, by Marshal Folstein and Susan Folstein.