

The frequency and pattern of cognitive impairment in the elderly at the outpatients clinic of the Holy Family Hospital, Techiman, Ghana

Authors: Dartel Norman,^A George Bedu-Addo^B and Fred S Sarfo^B

Aims

This study was conducted to determine the frequency and pattern of cognitive impairment in the elderly at the outpatients clinic of the Holy Family Hospital, Techiman, Ghana.

Methods

The study was a descriptive cross-sectional study. Cognitive impairment was assessed using modified versions of the 'test your memory test', a 10-word recall test, Trail Making Test (Part B) and the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE). The effect of cognitive impairment on daily activities was assessed using the activities of daily living scale. Multiple regression analysis was done to determine factors associated with the various cognitive tests chosen.

Results

The mean age (SD) was found to be 75.3(±7.8) years. There were more respondents in the 65–70 age group than any other age group. Forty-nine per cent of respondents had cognitive impairment using the 10-word list recall, whereas 72% of the respondents had cognitive impairment on the modified 'test your memory' test. On the MMSE, 76% of respondents had cognitive impairment. Only 50% of the respondents were able to perform the Trail Making Test, out of which 6% had cognitive impairment.

The highest scores in the 'test your memory' test were in verbal fluency, ability to copy and calculation, whereas the lowest scores were in visuospatial skills and semantic knowledge. The highest scores in the MMSE were in registration, verbal recall and orientation, whereas the lowest scores were in attention and arithmetic. A higher educational level was associated with higher scores on all the cognitive tests chosen ($p < 0.003$).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is a high frequency of cognitive impairment among elderly patients in Techiman Hospital. A

higher educational level was associated with higher scores on all the cognitive tests chosen. Elderly patients presenting at the outpatients clinic of the Holy Family Hospital, Techiman, will benefit from a cognitive assessment. ■

Conflict of interest statement

There was no conflict of interest situation.

Authors: ^AGeriatric medicine, Harrogate District Hospital, Harrogate, UK; ^BInternal medicine, Komfo Anoyke Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana