

Williams Memory Screening Test

J. Michael Williams

This memory test was designed to screen anterograde memory function in situations in which the patient has very limited memory abilities. It is commonly used in cases of traumatic brain injury when the patient is emerging from coma. It is also commonly used to evaluate memory in patients who have dementia-related illnesses.

The instructions are very simple and should be repeated and elaborated whenever necessary. The examiner should also feel free to encourage the patient to examine each trial of the test and make any associations they wish to the pictures. Patients who are very impaired often need lots of encouragement. Ask the patient to identify and name the pictures.

Instructions. Show the first trial to the patient. Say, "Here are six pictures on a card. I am going to point to one picture and ask you to remember it. Later, I will show you these six pictures and ask you to tell me which one I pointed to before. On this card, I want you to remember that I pointed to this picture here <point to the alarm clock in the middle of the second row>. What is this?"

Continue in this way until you have presented all 15 cards. Then, show card number 1 and say to the patient, "Here is a card I showed you before. Which picture on this card did I point to before?"

The classic response from the severely amnesic patient is, "You never showed me that picture before".

Continue presenting cards and ask the subject, "Which of these six pictures did I point to before?" Keep track of the responses. The score is the total correct of the 15 trials.

Each card has a code number. The first number is the trial number (1-15) and the second is the code indicating which picture the examiner points to. Each of the six pictures are numbered 1, 2 and 3 on the top row and 4, 5 and 6 on the bottom row. The numbering runs from left to right.

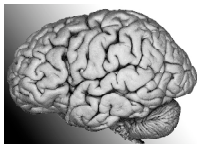
The MST was administered with the norming of the Memory Assessment Scales (MAS). Of approx 800 normal subjects, no subjects made more than 2 errors of 15. Only 12% of the subjects made 1 or 2 errors.

The test is very flexible. If you need an alternate form, just point to a different picture on each card.

The test was extensively used to examine trauma patients in recovery. Patients emerging from coma were given the test every day to monitor recovery. As a rule of thumb, once the patient was able to remember 13 of 15 trials, the patient was considered recovered to the point where other memory tests could be administered.

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