

How To Perform The Mini-Mental State Examination



Introduction

The Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) is a 30-point screening test to quantitatively assess the severity of cognitive impairments and to document cognitive changes that occur over time. It is not intended to serve as the sole criterion for diagnosing dementia or to differentiate between various forms of dementia. However, MMSE scores may be used to classify the severity of cognitive impairment or to document serial change in dementia patients.

The MMSE has scores which have been correlated with scores on the Functional Assessment Staging Tool (FAST) developed by Reisburg and used in determining typical time course of Alzheimer's disease. It is therefore a useful tool to support findings of the FAST scale. The MMSE is also very useful in assessing and documenting cognitive impairment in any patient which may have needs associated with mental status including age or disease-related dementia. Because it is so quick and easy to use, it is an especially helpful tool to document change over time.

The MMSE consists of a variety of questions, has a maximum score of 30 points, and ordinarily can be administered in 5-10 minutes.

The following three cut-off levels should be employed to classify the severity of cognitive impairment:

- No cognitive impairment = 24-30**
- Mild cognitive impairment = 18-23**
- Severe cognitive impairment = 0-17**

When is the MMSE to be completed?

1. The MMSE should be completed on admission of any patient with dementia/Alzheimer as the primary or secondary diagnosis and documented on the clinical note.
2. For each dementia/Alzheimer's patient for each recertification period. The score is documented on the Dementia Clinical Summary.
3. Anytime a patient's cognitive function would be considered a prognostic indicator for survival or any time there are significant changes in status. The score is documented in the clinical note.
4. The MMSE may also be completed for patients who have a coexisting cognitive impairment which may impact quality of life and survival. The score is documented in the clinical note.

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How to complete the MMSE Form

- 1. Nurses, psychosocial professionals, and physicians may complete the MMSE.
- 2. Review MMSE form.
- 3. Ask questions in the order listed on the form and score immediately.
- 4. If a patient is unable to complete a question, do not ask again.
- 5. Document score in the appropriate location.

Mini-Mental State Exam

Patient Score	Maximum Score	
		Orientation
_____	5	What is the (year) (season) (date) (day) (month)?
_____	5	Where are we (country) (state) (county) (city) (clinic)?
		Registration
_____	3	Name three objects, allowing one second to say each one. Then ask the patient to name all three objects after you have said them. Give one point for each correct answer. Repeat them until he hears all three. Count trials and record number. Apple...Book...Coat Number of Trials_____
		Attention and Calculation
_____	5	Begin with 100 and count backward by 7 (stop after five answers): 93, 86, 79, 72, 65. Score one point for each correct answer. If the patient will not perform this task, ask the patient to spell "WORLD" backwards (DLROW). Record the patients spelling:_____ Score one point for each correctly placed letter.
		Recall
_____	3	Ask the patient to repeat the objects above (see Registration). Give one point for each correct answer.

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		Language
_____	2	Naming: Show a pencil and a watch, and ask the patient to name them.
_____	1	Repetition: Repeat the following: "No ifs, ands, or buts."
_____	3	Three-Stage Command: Follow the three-stage command, "Take a paper in your right hand; fold it in half; and put it on the table."
_____	1	Reading: Read and obey the following: "Close your eyes" (show the patient the item written on reverse side).
_____	1	Writing: Write a sentence (on reverse side).
_____	1	Copying: Copy the design of the intersecting pentagons (on reverse side).
_____	30	Total Score Possible

*Note: The actual Mini-Mental State Assessment includes additional information about these items.

References

- Folstein MF, Folstein SE. Mini-Mental State: A practical method for grading the cognitive state of patients for the clinician. J Psychiat Res 12: 129-138, 1975.*
- Tombaugh TN, McIntyre NJ. The Mini-Mental State Examination: A comprehensive review. JAGS 40(9): 922-935, 1992*