TELPI PERFORMANCE IN COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT SUBJECTS: A VALIDATION STUDY

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Introduction: APA guidelines for dementia evaluation and age-related cognitive decline emphasize the need to have baseline test data from earlier years (premorbid) against which current performance could be compared. This information rarely exists and clinicians have to estimate premorbid abilities relying on instruments specially built for this purpose. No such instrument was available in Portugal until TELPI’s recent development, an irregular words reading test. This allowed us to fill an important gap in neuropsychological assessment of Portuguese patients and begin validation studies with this instrument.

Aims: Examine TELPI validity as an index of premorbid ability in Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and in Alzheimer Disease (AD).

Methods: 104 subjects with cognitive impairment (53 with MCI – Petersen, 1999; 51 with probable AD – APA, 2002) selected from the Dementia Clinic of the Neurology Department (Coimbra’s University Hospital) and a 104 healthy matched sample, were assessed with Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE), Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) and TELPI. Differences between groups were analyzed.

Results: Significant differences were observed between pathological and control groups in MMSE scores (t(206) = 9.218, p < .001) and MoCA scores (t(206) = 12.650, p < .001). This tendency was not revealed in TELPI scores (t(206) = .065, p > .05) confirming that irregular words reading is preserved in early stages of dementia.

Conclusions: Results show that cognitive impairment does not influence TELPI performance in estimating premorbid ability. This is a clear and exciting indication that TELPI can be useful for estimating premorbid intelligence in cognitive impaired subjects.