PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL STATUS EXAM

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Reading: Section on the mental status exam in whichever physical diagnosis text you are using. (In Bates, A Guide to Physical Examination and History Taking, 7th Edition, pp 107-128)

Learning Objectives:

After completing the reading, attending the lecture, and attending a small group discussion on the psychiatric mental status exam, the student should be able to:

1. List the parts of the mental status exam.
2. Define: mood, affect, thought process, thought content, illusion, and hallucination.
3. Know how to assess a patient’s intellectual (cognitive) functions including: orientation, concentration/attention, memory, use of language, fund of knowledge, abstract thinking, insight and judgement.

Sample Quiz Question:

Asking what he or she would do if he or she found a stamped and addressed envelope on the ground is one way to test a patient’s:

A. Abstract thinking
B. Fund of knowledge
C. Attention
D. Recent memory
E. Judgement

Answer: E
The Psychiatric Mental Status Exam (MSE) Checklist

I. Appearance and behavior

- Dress, grooming, hygiene
- Posture and gait
- Facial expression
- Eye contact (and relatedness to examiner)
- Motor activity
- Other mannerisms or behaviors
- Degree of cooperation with exam

II. Speech

- Rate
- Quantity
- Volume (loudness)
- Fluency
- Clarity (articulation)

III. Emotions

**Mood:** Pervasive and maintained emotional state, sometimes given in patient’s own words. Examples: sad, happy, angry, anxious.

**Affect:** Outward manifestation of mood. How the patient shows his feelings.

- Predominant
- Intensity
- Lability
- Appropriateness
IV. Thought

Process: Associations. How ideas fit together, including rate and flow.

Content: What is being thought.

V. Perceptions

Illusions: Misinterpreted sensory inputs.

Hallucinations: Perceiving input in absence of external sensory stimulation.

VI. Sensorium and intellectual (cognitive) functions (See attached table)

Level of Consciousness

Orientation

Concentration/Attention

Memory
  Immediate (new learning)
  Recent
  Remote

Use of Language
  Comprehension
  Repetition
  Naming
  Reading
  Writing

Fund of knowledge

Abstract thinking

Insight

Judgement
VII. How the patient makes you feel.

MINI-MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION

Patient _______________________________
Examiner _____________________________
Date _________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>( ) What is the (year) (season) (date) (month)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>( ) Where are we: (state) (country) (town) (hospital) (floor)</td>
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Registration

3     ( ) Name three objects: 1 second to say each. Then ask the patient all three after you have said them. Give 1 point for each correct answer. Then repeat them until he learns all three. Count trials and record.

Trials ___________

Attention And Calculation

5     ( ) Serial 7s. 1 point for each correct. Stop after five answers. Alternatively, spell ‘world” backwards.

Recall

3     ( ) Ask for the three objects repeated above. Give 1 point for each correct answer.

Language

9     ( ) Name a pencil, and watch. (2 points).

Repeat the following: “No ifs, ands, or buts.” (1 point)
Follow a three-stage command:
“Take a paper in your right hand, fold it in half, and put it on the floor.” (3 points)
Read and obey the following:
Close your eyes (1 point)
Write a sentence. (1 point)
Copy design. (1 point)

Perfect score = 30
Any score below 25 indicates the presence of significant cognitive dysfunction.

Assess the level of consciousness along a continuum:
Alert Drowsy Stupor Coma


Clinical psychiatry for medical students / edited by Alan Stoudemire.
- 3rd ed. 1998