

Abstract

Two new scales, the Concept Formation Test (CFT) and the Common Knowledge Test (CKT), were designed for assessing verbal abstract thinking and daily problem solving abilities, respectively. The Concept Formation Test consisted of ten Chinese proverbs, whereas the Common Knowledge Test was comprised of eight real-life problem situations. Both tests were constructed in multiple-choices format and each item was provided with four alternative answers. The present study examined the psychometric properties and predictive validity of the new scales for clinical use in Hong Kong. The CFT was found to have good reliability and construct validity. For CKT, it also demonstrated satisfactory reliability but data for construct validity was not impressive, which might relate to the multifaceted nature of problem solving abilities. Preliminary normative data were provided for the adult and child population, respectively. Regarding the test's clinical utility, both the CFT and the CKT were found to have an overall classification rate of 87.7 % and 69.7% in differentiating schizophrenic and patients with temporal lobe necrosis from normal controls, respectively. For a group of Anterior Communicating Artery (ACoA) aneurysm patients, their performance in the CFT and the CKT was lower than the normal controls but did not reach statistical significance. Although the CFT and the CKT were not without their limitations, the tests' brevity and simple administration enabled it to be a potentially valuable instrument for screening impairment in verbal abstract thinking and problem solving in the local setting.