Decoding the diagnosis: How memory and thinking problems are assessed and diagnosed.

Sheliza Ali, PhD
Questions

• Who do I talk to about my cognition and memory?
• How will my cognition and memory be tested?
• What does the diagnosis mean?
• What happens after?
What does cognition mean?

It is the process of thinking, learning, remembering, and understanding information.
Who do I talk to about my memory?

- What have you noticed
- Loved ones have noticed...
- When did it start worrying you
- Has it changed in any way? Getting worse? Staying the same? Fluctuating?
How will my cognition and memory be tested

Neuropsychologist

Cognitive Testing

Memory
- Learning stories, list, pictures

Executive
- Problem-solving, Multi-tasking

Language
- Naming, listing words, defining

Spatial
- Designs, drawings

Speed
- Matching, connecting letters/numbers
How will my cognition and memory be tested

Neuropsychologist

Cognitive Testing

Memory
Executive
Language
Spatial
Speed

Age
Education
Sex
What is considered when making a diagnosis?

- Cognitive performance
  - Memory
  - Executive
  - Language
  - Spatial
  - Speed

- Activities of daily living
  - BASIC:
  - Instrumental:
What does this diagnosis mean?
No signs of decline in cognition.
Areas of strength/weakness.
Typical for your age.
Affected by cognition.
No Diagnosis
- No signs of decline in cognition.
- Areas of strength/weakness.

Mild Cognitive Impairment
- Modest decline in cognition.
- Not better explained.

Mild Neurocognitive Disorder
- Daily activities still independent.
- May be more difficult.
- Uses compensation strategies.
## Diagnosis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Diagnosis</th>
<th>Mild Cognitive Impairment</th>
<th>Major Neurocognitive Disorder</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| • No signs of decline in cognition.  
  • Areas of strength/weakness. | • Modest decline in cognition.  
  • Not better explained. | • Signs of significant decline.  
  • Not better explained. |

| • Daily activities not affected by cognition | • Daily activities still independent.  
  • May be more difficult.  
  • Uses compensation strategies. | • Dependent on others for daily activities.  
  • Can range:  
  • Mild  
  • Moderate  
  • Severe |

- **Pain**
- **Mood**
- **Sleep**
- **Other Medical**
What’s the cause?

- Not always Alzheimer disease.
What happens after?

- That depends...

- Medications
- Referrals
- Therapy
- Lifestyle Changes
- Monitor
Thank You