TESTAMENTARY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (TCAT): AN UPDATE REPORT

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Introduction: TCAT is a recently developed short instrument (15 minutes are required for its administration), with good psychometric properties, specialized for the assessment of testamentary capacity (TC) in dementia. It assesses memory, perception of financial parameters and judgment. The present study reports all studies about TCAT.

Methods: Pubmed database as well as unpublished data by the authors of the TCAT have been used.

Results: As of now, there are no other specialized TC assessment instruments with measured psychometric properties in the scientific literature. Unpublished data on amnestic mild cognitive impairment (aMCI) performance using the TCAT show no difference of aMCI in comparison to healthy adults at any part of the tool. Another unpublished study has examined the correlation between the three parts of TCAT and the expert opinion regarding TC in patients with dementia. It has shown that Part C "financial parameters" demonstrates the highest correlation with the expert opinion. Validation and standardization of the TCAT in the Greek population is under way. The preliminary results show that age, and not educational level or gender, predicts the performance in TCAT. Validation and normative data of the TCAT in an Italian population of 323 healthy adults is provided in a recent published study, showing that it is useful as an adjuvant instrument for TC assessment in the elderly.

Conclusion: While the TCAT is a useful tool, more studies are needed in different cultures, both in healthy adults and cognitively impaired adults, for its standardized use in forensic and clinical settings.