



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Cognitive Screening for Youths Abusing Substances in Hong Kong

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Introduction

Substance use at a young age is associated with higher risk of chronic neuropsychological impairment. Neuropsychological assessment is necessary for rehabilitative planning for people with neurological impairments. However, comprehensive neuropsychological assessment is time and resource consuming. Therefore, it is important to develop cognitive screening instruments that are relatively less time-intensive and suitable for use by frontline staffs.

Objectives

To evaluate the psychometric properties of the Hong Kong version of Addenbrooke's Cognitive Examination – Revised (HK-ACE-R), and the Hong Kong version of Montreal Cognitive Assessment (HK-MoCA) in youth patients with substance abuse in Hong Kong.

Methodology

Forty-five patients with substance abuse (SA) were recruited in the Substance Abuse Assessment Unit in Kwai Chung Hospital. HK-ACE-R and HK-MoCA were administered. A battery of standardized neuropsychological assessments was also conducted to measure their cognitive functions. Two groups were classified based on the results of these standardized measures, in which twenty-nine patients were classified as the group of "SA patients with cognitive impairments", while the remaining sixteen patients were grouped as "SA control group" for comparison. Validity and classification accuracy of HK-ACE-R and HK-MoCA were examined.

Result

Correlation coefficients between cognitive screening tools and the standardized measures revealed satisfactory criterion validity. Both HK-MoCA and HK-ACE-R successfully differentiated patients with cognitive impairment from the control group without cognitive impairment.