

Wednesday 5 December, 1-2pm, G10 Chandler House

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Development of the standardised, multilingual mini linguistic state examination (MLSE) to classify and monitor primary progressive aphasia

Background:

Language assessment is critical in the diagnosis of patients with neurodegenerative diseases, in particular those presenting with progressive speech and language impairment such as the primary progressive aphasias (PPA). Current diagnostic criteria identify three main variants of PPA based on clinical and neuroimaging features: *semantic variant PPA* - characterised by dramatically reduced ability to understand the meaning of words and objects; *nonfluent variant PPA* – featuring problems with the grammatical and prosodic aspects of language production; and *logopenic variant PPA* – characterised by a striking inability to repeat spoken sentences. Most currently utilised assessments of the heterogeneous language profiles of PPA are time-consuming and not readily comparable across languages. Improved tools to screen, diagnose, and monitor these conditions will be essential to progress in the characterisation and treatments for brain diseases underlying PPAs. The aim of the current project is to develop and fully validate English and Italian versions of an abbreviated language assessment instrument, the Mini Linguistic State Examination (MLSE), which will be able to detect the differing patterns of linguistic deficit that characterise the three variants of PPA with complete equivalence between English and Italian versions.

Methods:

Participants completed the MLSE test which included tasks of picture naming, word and sentence repetition, word and sentence comprehension, reading, writing, semantic association, and picture description.

Results:

Preliminary data were used to present contrasting characteristics of the MLSE performance in 30 patients with PPA (10 PNFA, 10 SD, 10 LPA), and a matched control group (30 controls; aged: 45-75 years).

Conclusions:

The MLSE will provide a much-needed short clinical tool to classify and monitor PPA. Additionally, the MLSE will be a template for further language-specific versions.