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### **Early detection of cognitive deficits in general practice setting**

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**Background:** It is known that the period that passes between the onset of symptoms and the diagnosis of dementia is from several months to several years. Cognitive impairments identified with one or more neuropsychological tests do not confirm the diagnosis directly. The currently existing tests have their strengths and weaknesses, which is the reason why most authors recommend combining different tests in batteries.

**Research question:** The aim of this study was to examine the feasibility of a battery of tests to detect cognitive impairments in a general practice.

**Methodology:** A cross-sectional study among 575 patients over 60 years, using a battery of three neurophysiological tests, which evaluate different cognitive functions – The Trail Making Test (TMT); The Mini-Cog Test (MCT) and Isaaks Set Test (IST), was conducted.

The results were processed by SPSS 17.0 version, using descriptive statistics.

**Results:** The research was done in 23 general practices among patients over 60 years, randomly selected.

Differences were obtained in reporting the results of the three tests. In regard to TMT - 271/48.30% were positive for cognitive deficits. Significant influence was found in terms of education. The smallest share positive results were established in the MCT -49/8.76%, without significant influence of gender, age and education. Approximately 1/5 of the participants showed changes in IST, with a significant influence of age. Overall, in the study group 177/31.66% had at least one positive test; 91/16.27% were positive in two tests; 25/4.47% of the studied patients had abnormalities in all three tests.

**Conclusions:** Each one of the used tests has proven its value, but it is the combination of tests that improves their predictive function. However, positive tests suggest the diagnosis of dementia as a possible one, but not as definitely proven. General practice is a suitable environment for a widespread use of a battery of tests for early detection of cognitive deficits.