Introduction

Age Associated Memory Impairment (AAMI) has been used as an objective way of defining cognitive decline with ageing. The concept, developed by Crook et al. in 1985, has well-defined criteria. AAMI was originally developed to refer to a subgroup of normal older individuals, but there is evidence to suggest that it may be a discrete entity, showing significant brain and behavioral changes compared to normal age-related changes. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which memory is affected in AAMI using COGTEST.

Method

We examined verbal, visual, and working memory performance in 146 subjects with AAMI to determine if a domain specific or generalized memory performance deficit existed. Classification of AAMI was based on the following criteria:

1. age above 60;
2. memory test performance 1 standard deviation below the mean established for young adults;
3. complaints of memory loss; and
4. adequate intellectual functioning. Exclusion criteria were medical and psychiatric conditions that could produce cognitive deterioration, such as stroke, inflammatory brain diseases, delirium, depression, history of alcoholism. Moreover, people taking medications which could contribute to impaired cognitive performance, such as psychotropic or anticholinergic drugs, were excluded.

Results

AAMI group had significantly lower scores on the word list memory test and the face memory test but not the auditory number sequence task.

Conclusion

Impairment in verbal and visual memory but not in working memory domains in AAMI compared to control subjects was seen. The COGTEST library of tests can be used to identify cognitive deficits in AAMI.

References


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