

FACTS ABOUT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

What is an assessment?

Psychological/neuropsychological assessment refers to the process of measuring a person's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functions. This assessment answers key questions about the individual's functioning, and aids in making diagnostic, rehabilitative, educational, and treatment decisions.

How is an assessment done?

The evaluation involves meeting with the patient (and his/her family when appropriate) over one or two extended sessions, that may last from two to eight hours. This includes an interview with the patient or family, a review of medical and educational records, and the administration of standardized tests and procedures. At the end of the evaluation, the patient and/or family are verbally briefed on all the findings, diagnoses and recommendations in a feedback session. After two to four weeks, the patient/family is provided with a written report containing this information.

Who conducts a neuropsychological assessment?

The overall evaluation is conducted by staff psychologists specialized in the objective evaluation of psychological and neuropsychological functioning. Some tests may be conducted by other trained professionals.

Why are patients referred for an evaluation?

In infants, children and adolescents there are often questions about diagnosis and recommendations that center around:

- Development (e.g., how delayed are my child's abilities and what should I do about them?).
- The impact of medical disorders (e.g., how have seizures affected my child's cognitive functioning?).
- The impact of treatments (e.g., what changes should I expect after radiotherapy to the brain?), and rehabilitation (e.g., Will my child need psychomotor therapy?).
- Learning (e.g., why is my child having difficulties in reading and writing?).
- Adaptive functioning (e.g., can my child function independently as his/her peers?).

Adults and the elderly usually have concerns about their cognitive abilities and daily functioning such as: frequently losing items, not recognizing familiar persons, forgetting events, words, names or important information, getting lost easily, doing poorly in complex situations, having poor judgment or changes in personality.

Their evaluation will often focus on:

- Measuring the impact of medical conditions on the person's behavior and cognition (e.g., what are the changes in cognitive functioning after brain injury?).
- Helping the physician in diagnosing neurocognitive disorders (e.g., does the person have a neurocognitive/ cognitive disorder that explains his/her symptoms?).
- Tracking the changes in the person's functioning (e.g., How is the person's memory and language before and after brain surgery?).
- Guiding rehabilitation (e.g., will this person require occupational therapy?).
- Giving recommendations for everyday life (e.g., what does this person need to function as independently as possible?).

Based on such concerns, the clinician will refer the patient for an evaluation at the Psychological Assessment Center (PAC). If you think that you or your child might benefit from an evaluation, talk to your doctor about it or call +961 - 1 - 350000 (ext. 7895-7518) for more information.

To schedule an appointment with your personal doctor, please call 01-350000 extension 3000. In case you are not able to come to your appointment, please call to cancel or re-schedule your appointment.

What to expect on the day of your visit (or your child's visit)?

You should arrive at 8:30 am to the third floor of Building 56 (Psychiatry Department) at AUBMC. It is advisable that you sleep well the night before, and follow your usual routine regarding meals and any medication, (if you are fasting, it is advisable not to fast on the day of the assessment).

- Wear your eye glasses and your hearing aids if you have any and bring copies of all relevant records with you (school records rehabilitation reports, external medical records).
- When you arrive, please check-in at the reception desk with your AUBMC card (if you have one). You will be asked to complete standard forms regarding basic information and common symptoms.
- After that, you (and/or your family) will meet with the psychologist for an interview, where you can discuss concerns and the purpose of the evaluation.
- You will then undergo testing of abilities that are relevant to those concerns. Tests take the form of one-on-one familiar "activities" (e.g., drawing, computer tasks, questionnaires, interviews, or structured play).
- You will be given frequent breaks, including a lunch break, so that the day resembles a typical school or working day.
- The evaluation is completed by a feedback session.

The evaluation involves activities, positive feedback, and individualized attention. Some people may be more anxious than others or easily fatigued and bored. The psychologist dedicates time to make the test-taker feel at ease, and keep them motivated to do their best.

What is the cost?

The cost depends on the type of the evaluation, and usually ranges between 450\$ and 630\$. You will be informed of the exact cost when you schedule an appointment. Evaluations may be reimbursed by some plans in major insurance companies, and are covered by the AUB HIP insurance.

For more information go to www.aubmc.org, Patient Care, Departments/Divisions, Psychiatry. or visit: http://www.aubmc.org.lb/patientcare/dep_div/Pages/psychiatry.aspx