



BACKGROUND Cognition refers to skills such as remembering, learning new things, or making decisions. A common syndrome in cognitive decline is dementia. It is beyond what might be expected from normal aging. About 13% of U.S. older adults aged 65 and over have Alzheimer's disease - the most common form of dementia. The prevalence increases with age. Nearly half of people aged 85 and over (45%) have Alzheimer's disease. The prevalence of dementia among Asian Americans is comparable to the national level.

STUDY RESULTS

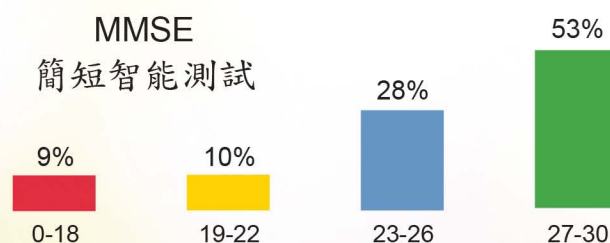
MINI-MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION (MMSE) MMSE is a widely used 30-item measure to detect cognitive abilities including orientation to time and place, recall ability, short-term memory, and arithmetic ability. Score ranged from 0 to 30. The mean score of MMSE was 25.3 in this study population. In comparison, a population study of American older adults in Chicago reported a mean score of 26.5.



背景 認知能力是指在記憶，學習新東西，或者做決定方面的能力。認知功能減弱的常見症狀就是失智症，或稱癡呆症，其中以阿茲海默症最多，但這並不是正常老化現象。全美65歲以上的老人中13%患此症，85歲以上則將近一半有此症。亞裔老人失智比例與美國老人比例相近。

研究結果

簡短智能測驗 此測驗利用30道問題了解認知能力，包含對時間地點的記憶，回想力，短期記憶以及算數能力。在我們的研究中，華人老人在簡短智能測驗的平均分是25.3。相對比較，芝加哥美國老人平均分是26.5。



“ I believe that in a non-Chinese family, family members would no doubt bring seniors who suffer from dementia to see a doctor. But we Chinese who love to save face always try to solve the problems at home. The Chinese would not let other people know about a patient's condition, such as those uncontrollable behaviors.” - Study Participant

「我覺得若不是在華人家裏，家人肯定會帶癡呆老人去看醫生。但是我們中國人總是覺得家醜不能外揚，不想讓別人知道老人有什麼不正常，尤其是病人那些不能控制自己的行為。」

- 研究受訪者

CONCLUSION Prevention of cognitive decline is critical for older adults to stay independent. However, stigma has been identified as a major issue for dementia patients and caregivers in Chinese families. The tendency to view dementia as part of aging and the derogatory label of dementia patients as slow-witted may lead older adults to view themselves as being of less value, and be interpreted as a sign that family members failed to live up to filial obligations. Culturally sensitive approaches to reduce stigma associated with cognitive decline will be critical in encouraging patients to seek treatment, and also to alleviating caregiver stress.

結論 防止認知能力的下降是使老年人保持獨立生活的重要因素。然而對老年癡呆覺得羞恥仍是老人以及照顧者面臨的問題。患有失智症的老人經常被視為不正常，導致患病老人降低自我價值，家庭成員也被譴責沒有盡孝。從文化中消除對失智症的歧視對提高就醫比例及減少照護者壓力有重要幫助。