



Tower of London test — short version

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ABSTRACT

Tower of London (ToL) is a neuropsychological method for assessing planning ability. In this study, we attempted to introduce a shorter version of ToL. Two studies were carried out. In Study 1, patients with mild cognitive impairment due to Parkinson's Disease ($n = 36$) and a control group ($n = 225$) were included in order to select a suitable short version of ToL for Study 2. In Study 2, patients with schizophrenia ($n = 30$) and a control group ($n = 31$) were included in order to assess psychometric properties of the shortened version of ToL. Based on psychometric evaluations in Study 1, we offered three possible shortened versions. In Study 2, all three shortened versions proved to have good discriminative validity in our schizophrenia sample, but interestingly not in the healthy sample. We concluded that the use of shortened ToL is possible in specific psychiatric/neurological patient groups, although we do not recommend doing so in healthy individuals.

Key words: Tower of London, short version, executive functions, planning ability, problem solving, neuropsychological assessment

Introduction

'Executive functions' is an umbrella term for various cognitive processes including problem solving, planning, organisational skills and inhibitory control. In neuropsychology, information about patients' planning ability, problem solving etc. can be obtained using multiple methods. These might include neuropsychological tests, observations, interviews, questionnaires, and rating scales. For the purposes of assessing executive functions, and particularly planning ability, Hunter and Sparrow [1] mention not only Tower of London tests, but also maze tasks, several variants of the categorisation tests (e.g. Wisconsin Card Sorting Test), copying designs in the Rey-Osterrieth Complex Figure (ROCF), and verbal fluency tasks.

The Tower of London (ToL) task was first proposed by Shallice [2] as an alternative to the Tower of Hanoi. Nowadays, the ToL is frequently used in clinical psychology settings for an assessment of executive functioning, namely planning ability [3, 4].

Specific clinical populations have been proven to have poor performance when it comes to the ToL task, especially patients with frontal lobe impairment [2, 4, 5]. The ToL is also being used in assessing patients with Parkinson's Disease [6-8], Huntington's Disease [9-11], schizophrenia [8, 12, 13], dementia or mild cognitive impairment [14-17], and autism spectrum disorder [18-20].

Over the years, various versions of the original ToL have been introduced [18, 21-23], using an inconsistent variety of problems, performance measures and methodologies [3].

For example, a standardised version of the ToL test has been developed for use as a part of the Delis-Kaplan Executive Function System [24]. The Tower test in D-KEFS is longer than the original ToL, but covers a wider spectrum of performance, from severe deficits to superior performance. In the D-KEFS Tower Test, there are nine different towers to be completed with various levels of difficulty. Testing begins with simple towers requiring only 1-3 moves, and gradually becomes more difficult with towers requiring up to 26 moves [25].

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Tower Of London Test Manual

**Esther Strauss, Elisabeth M. S.
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Tower Of London Test Manual:

Reviewing **Tower Of London Test Manual**: Unlocking the Spellbinding Force of Linguistics

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