

Neuropsychological test performance of Spanish speakers: Is performance different across different Spanish-speaking subgroups?

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DOI:

10.1080/13803395.2013.778232

Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology

vol. 35, Issue 4, 2013

Abstract

Even though theories and research have pointed out the importance of variables such as age, gender, or education on neuropsychological assessment, much less emphasis has been placed on language and culture. With the increasing population of Spanish speakers in North America and the limited amount of clinical and scholarly information currently available, neuropsychological assessment of this group has similarly become of increasing importance. Though several studies have been published over the last two decades, an assumption exists that all Spanish speakers, holding education and age constant, would perform similarly regardless of their origin. To address this assumption, a sample of 126 participants was tested from four different countries (Chile, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Spain). Participants were compared on the following commonly used neuropsychological tests: Verbal Serial Learning Curve, Rey–Osterrieth Complex Figure Test, Verbal Phonemic Fluency Test, the Stroop Color and Word Test, and the Trail Making Test. Analyses revealed significant differences across the groups in two of the five tests administered. Significant differences were observed in the delayed recall of the Serial Learning Test and in the Verbal Fluency Test. The findings highlight the importance of within-group differences between Spanish speakers.

Keywords: Hispanics, Spanish speakers, Culture, Neuropsychology, Assessment