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Wisconsin Card Sorting Test performance in patients with focal frontal and posterior brain damage: effects of lesion location and test structure on separable cognitive processes

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Abstract

Forty-six patients with single focal lesions (35 frontal, 11 nonfrontal) were administered the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test (WCST) under three conditions of test administration. The three conditions varied in the amount of external support provided via specificity of instructions. The WCST, while a multifactorial test, is specifically sensitive to the effects of frontal lobe damage if deficits in language comprehension and visual spatial search are controlled. There is also specificity of functioning within the frontal lobes: patients with inferior medial frontal lesions, unilateral or bilateral, were not impaired on the standard measures although they had increased loss of set when informed of the sorting

categories. Verbal instructions may provide a probe to improve diagnosis and prognosis, assessment of the potential efficacy of treatment, and the time frame of plasticity of specific cognitive operations.



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Keywords

Card sorting; Frontal lobes; Localization of process

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