

Cognitive-Functional Evaluation within the Ultra - Orthodox Community: A Pilot Study

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Background. Cognition has a central role in rehabilitation after acquired brain injury. Thus, it is essential to carry out a comprehensive evaluation in order to gauge the capabilities and weaknesses of these individuals. Today there is a tendency to develop cognitive-functional assessments by and for occupational therapists; assessments that have ecological validity. Like any cognitive assessment, functional tools also are required to be sensitive to cultural diversity and educational level. This article describes a pilot study aimed at examining the fit of a cognitive-functional evaluation with a small sample of individuals from the ultra-orthodox Jewish community. The study used a newly developed functional cognitive assessment for the purpose of evaluating executive function skills in individuals following traumatic brain injury (TBI). The Functional Loewenstein Occupational Therapy Cognitive Assessment (FLOTCA) went through an initial validation process with young individuals. **Method.** Twenty healthy participants from the ultra-orthodox community, 18-45 years (mean=25.3 years, SD=7.35 years), 11 men and 9 women matched to the control group for age and gender, as reported by the FLOTCA developers. **Results.** The results of the study group were compared to the data of the healthy control group. A statistically significant difference was found in one of the assessment sub-tests, 'organization of daily schedule'. Participants from the ultra-orthodox group scored lower than participants in the control group. **Conclusions.**

Our sample is small and does not represent the variability in the ultra-orthodox community. However, the results highlight the importance of the validation of cognitive-functional assessments in the various cultural groups in society. The discussion refers to characteristics that may influence the outcome of cognitive-functional evaluations among ultra-orthodox individuals.