Comparison of the Texas Functional Living Scale and Wechsler Memory Scale–Fourth Edition in a Mild Alzheimer Disease Sample

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Introduction
The Texas Functional Living Scale (TFLS; Cullum, Weiner, & Saine, 2009) is a newly published performance-based measure of instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs). The TFLS consists of 24 items that contribute to four subscales representing various IADLs. The subscales are: Time, Money and Calculation, Communication, and Memory. Many items provide a range of possible points accounting for the varying levels of functioning that may appear in clinical populations (Binegar, 2007). Each subscale yields a cumulative percentage. An overall T-score is provided to help determine the examinee’s ability to function independently.

The Wechsler Memory Scale–Fourth Edition (WMS–IV; Wechsler, 2009) is an individually administered battery designed to assess various memory and working memory abilities; it is the most recent edition of the Wechsler Memory Scale. Two batteries are available within the WMS–IV, an Adult Battery and an Older Adult Battery. The WMS–IV Older Adult Battery was used for this study. The Older Adult Battery does not contain all of the subtests provided in the Adult Battery leading to a decrease in overall administration time and minimizing examinee fatigue. The Older Adult Battery consists of four subtests, three of which are divided into immediate and delayed conditions. The four subtests contribute to four summary Indexes: Auditory Memory, Immediate Memory, Delayed Memory, and Visual Memory. The WMS–IV also contains a brief measure of cognitive status. The Brief Cognitive Status Exam (BCSE) assesses a variety of cognitive functions and provides an overall picture of the examinee’s functioning. The BCSE Total Raw Score is converted into a classification level ranging from Very Low to Average.

Alzheimer Disease (AD) involves impairment in memory and cognitive disturbances accompanied by significant impairment in social and occupational functioning. Many individuals who later develop dementia experience subtle changes in IADLs several years before the formal diagnosis of dementia. Given the sensitivity of IADLs to this disease process, it is imperative to identify deficits early on to maximize efficacy of interventions.

Objective
The objective of this study is to determine the sensitivity of a newly developed measure of IADLs to the impairments of AD.

Methods
35 individuals identified with AD were administered the standardization editions of the TFLS and the WMS–IV Older Adult Battery.

Participants
The sample consisted of 35 individuals, ages 61–89 that were identified with Probable Alzheimer Disease–Mild Severity. The sample was collected as part of the TFLS and WMS–IV standardizations. Diagnostic criteria followed the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke and the Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Association (NINCDS-ADRDA) guidelines for probable AD. The demographic information for the sample is reported in Table 1.

Results
The AD sample was mildly to moderately impaired (T-score=32) on TFLS, Performance on WMS–IV ranged from Extremely Low (DMI= 66) to Borderline (MM= 72). The overall Brief Cognitive Status Exam classification was Very Low (BCSE Total Raw Score= 31). The mean TFLS T-Score and WMS–IV subtest and index scores are presented in Table 2.

Conclusion
The results of this study are consistent with previous studies; individuals identified with AD show impairment in overall memory functioning and instrumental activities of daily living. This study provides initial evidence of the validity of TFLS as a reliable assessment of IADLs.

References