



Allied Health Practice Statement Montreal Cognitive Assessment – MoCA (2020)

Rationale for Practice Statement:

The Montreal Cognitive Assessment since conception in 1996 has garnered national and international recognition in the field of cognitive evaluation and detection of mild cognitive impairment. In 2019 MoCA informed health care professionals, medical practitioners and diagnosticians that ***“to ensure consistency and accuracy, training and certification to administer and score the MoCA Test is mandatory”***.

The practice statement’s aim is to guide allied health professionals in ensuring that they are appropriately equipped and knowledgeable in performing the MoCA as approved by WRHA.

Preamble:

The Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) is a brief, 30-question tool that helps healthcare professionals detect possible cognitive impairments. The MoCA was designed as a rapid screening instrument for mild cognitive dysfunction. It assesses different cognitive domains: attention and concentration, visuospatial abilities, executive functions, and working memory, language and orientation. The MoCA is used across all sectors within the WRHA.

Practice Statement:

1. Only health care professionals, with expertise and competency in the cognitive field, shall administer and interpret results from the MoCA.
2. Health care professionals shall be trained by discipline or designated team specific clinicians who have obtained official standardized MoCA training and certification. All health care professionals who are required to use the MoCA are recommended to review with site or team designated champion.
3. For allied health disciplines, MoCA test results are not to provide health care professionals with a diagnosis, but rather with additional information to be interpreted in the light of other psychosocial/medical information and may direct further assessment and investigation. As such, MoCA results cannot be the only measure used to diagnose a person presenting with cognitive complaints.
4. Results cannot be used exclusively. Results considered normal do not necessarily imply that cognitive impairment is not present and vice versa, therefore further discipline-specific assessment should be considered.

5. Clinicians should be aware of the potential for cultural bias and to ensure that interpretation is offered for anyone with a partial or full language barrier.
6. It is recommended that each discipline develop a guideline on how to put the MoCA into practice and determine certification champions.
7. It is advised that if the MoCA score is used in research, readiness to return to work or other life-altering decision making processes, the administering clinician shall be certified.
8. Each professional and their agency shall determine their own risk tolerance and need for certification determined by individual application and utilization of test results.

Supporting Tools:

1. MoCA Training Module (link provided by discipline regional lead)
2. MoCA Montreal – Cognitive Assessment
<https://www.mocatest.org>

If you have further questions please contact your WRHA Allied Health Leader or designated team leader.