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Interests and limits in evaluation of cognitive disorders for the elderly

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Lots of consultations exist at the moment to evaluate cognitive capacities of the elderly. When elderly people begin to have memory problems, they often want to know if something is possible to help them and to have the opinion of specialists. Sometimes, its a member of the family, a general practitioner or a doctor of a hospital who do this request when they think that an elderly people begin to have troubles of memory or behaviour. Also, when an elderly person is in an institution, neuropsychological evaluations are often asked. In geriatrics institutions, where there are people with Alzheimer disease or related disorders, neuropsychological evaluations are most often also present. In some epidemiological studies, neuropsychological evaluations are done from several years to try to find factors of risks and protection from pathological ageing. In this talk, we describe the interests of a neuropsychological evaluation, how we can do it with an amnesia and neuropsychological tests in the way to take care of the patients and to answer to initial request. We also try to give the limits of this evaluation according to the question which is to treat and according to the way of the return which is done. It depends on each case, and it is not the same for the patient, the family, the general practitioner, the other doctors in hospital, the members of an institution where the patient is for the end of his life or the public health. Finally, we try to give a general view of criticism and interest of premature cognitive evaluation of the elderly.

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