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The Psychiatric Mental Status Exam (MSE)

Appearance and behavior

Dress, grooming, hygiene

Posture and gait

Facial expression

Eye contact (and relatedness to examiner)

Motor activity

Other mannerisms or behaviors

Degree of cooperation with exam

How the patient makes you feel

Speech

Rate

Quantity

Volume (loudness)

Fluency

Clarity (articulation)

Emotions

Mood: Pervasive and maintained emotional state, sometimes given in patient's own words.
Examples: sad, happy, angry, anxious.

Affect: Outward manifestation of mood. How the patient shows his feelings.

Predominant

Intensity

Lability

Appropriateness

Thought

Process or Form: Associations. How ideas fit together, including rate and flow.

Poverty of thought – few thoughts

Blocking – inability to form thoughts

Racing thoughts, flight of ideas – rapid thoughts

Loose associations – disconnected thoughts

Circumstantiality – lots of extra details but gets to point

Tangentiality – connections between thoughts may be apparent, but question is never answered

Content: what is being thought

Delusions – fixed, false beliefs

Ideas (or Delusions) of reference – belief that some often unimportant event is related specifically to the patient

Thought insertion or withdrawal – belief that thoughts are being taken out of or put into head

Thought broadcasting – belief that others can hear thoughts

Obsessions – distracting, persistent thoughts

Compulsions – irresistible urges to perform meaningless tasks

Phobias – irrational fears of specific things

Perceptions:

Illusions: Misinterpreted sensory inputs

Hallucinations: Perceiving input in absence of external sensory stimulation

Visual

Auditory

Olfactory

Gustatory

Tactile (Haptic)

Hypnagogic – hallucinations as patient falls asleep or awakens

Dissociative States

Depersonalization – feeling that one is not oneself

Derealization – feeling that the world, people and things around are not real

Sensorium and intellectual (cognitive) functions (see attached table)

Level of consciousness

Orientation

Concentration/Attention

Memory

Immediate (new learning)

Recent

Remote

Use of Language

Comprehension

Repetition

Naming

Reading

Writing

Fund of knowledge

Abstractions

Insight

Judgment