

# THREE ITEM RECALL TEST

Name

date

Tested by

## 1. The questions

Give the patient three words to remember (usually, the names of two concrete objects and one abstract idea).

*Please remember and repeat the following: ball, telephone, and charity.*

Ask the patient to repeat the three words immediately, which tests immediate recall and also shows whether the patient can attend, concentrate, and understand instructions.

**Go on to other interview questions.**

**After 5 minutes, ask the patient to repeat the three words again.**

## 2. The answers : 2/3

If the patient can only remember two of the three (2/3) items, repeat the test.

If the patient has a primary psychiatric disorder, the memory should improve.

If the patient has a neurological deficit, the memory will remain impaired.

The patient can be given a categorical hint (i.e., a round object) or a list of multiple-choice answers, which provides additional cues and uses recognition memory (which is less readily impaired than short-term recall).

## 2. The answers : 0/3 or 1/3

If the patient can only recall 0/1 or 1/3 items after 5 minutes, provide three evocative or colourful things to remember.

*Please remember these things that I love: The Beatles, fast red cars, and chocolate ice cream.*

If the patient can recall these after 5 minutes, it means that the poor score on Test One was probably due to anxiety, inability to attend (secondary to delirium), poor concentration, or lack of effort.

COMMENT