

Saint Louis University Mental Status Exam (SLUMS)

What is the SLUMS?

The Saint Louis University Mental Status Exam (SLUMS) is a screening questionnaire designed to assess for mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and dementia. It is a 30 point, 11 question test that takes approximately 7 minutes to administer and tests for orientation, memory, attention, and executive functions. 13 of the 30 points pertain to verbal memory; 5 points are linked to attention/concentration; 5 points for visuospatial/constructional abilities; 4 points pertain to language; 3 points pertain to orientation.¹ The tester will need a watch with a second hand on it. Scoring on the SLUMS will depend on the level of education. The SLUMS is free to use by health care professionals who have been trained annually by viewing the VA produced video available on the website.

Population the Test Serves

The SLUMS test has been largely tested in the older adult veteran population though other researchers have looked at patients with TBI and mixed neurological disorders.

Importance of SLUMS

While other brief cognitive screens exist, the SLUMS exists in the public domain and can be administered free of charge. The SLUMS was designed to be more effective at identifying early or MCI. It was created due to noted limitations in the Mini Mental State Exam (MMSE) including its heavy reliance on orientation items in the total score, the difficulty in identifying cognitive impairment in more educated individuals, and its relatively poor ability to distinguish MCI from dementia.²

Psychometric Properties and Cut-off scores:

More research is needed to determine the reliability, validity and use in diverse samples. There is limited literature regarding normative data for the SLUMS.¹ For individuals with at least a high school education, 27-30 was normal, 21-26 suggested mild neurocognitive disorder with a sensitivity of 95% and a specificity of 76%, and 0-20 suggested major neurocognitive disorder with a sensitivity of 98% and specificity of 100%. The SLUMS has a 74% sensitivity and 65% specificity for detecting MCI when a cut off value ≤ 26 is used and a 93% sensitivity and a 96% specificity for detecting dementia with a cut off ≤ 20 .⁴³

Resources

1. Spencer RJ, Noyes ET, Bair JL, Ransom MT. Systematic Review of the Psychometric Properties of the Saint Louis University Mental Status (SLUMS) Examination. *Clin Gerontol*. 2022;45(3):454-466. doi:10.1080/07317115.2022.2032523
2. Merz ZC, Lace JW. Clinical utility of the Saint Louis University Mental Status Examination (SLUMS) in a mixed neurological sample: Proposed revised cutoff scores for normal cognition, mild cognitive impairment, and dementia. *Appl Neuropsychol Adult*. Preprint. Posted online Aug 5, 2022. doi: 10.1080/23279095.2022.2106572.
3. Cummings-Vaughn LA, Chavakula NN, Malmstrom TK, Tumosa N, Morley JE, Cruz-Oliver DM. Veterans Affairs Saint Louis University Mental Status examination compared with the Montreal Cognitive Assessment and the Short Test of Mental Status. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2014;62(7):1341-1346. doi:10.1111/jgs.12874

Shirley Ryan Ability Lab Rehabilitation SLUMS Page link: <https://www.sralab.org/rehabilitation-measures/saint-louis-university-mental-status-exam>

Video explaining more information about the SLUMS/training video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4ctoWU-qzw>

Link to Test

https://www.slu.edu/medicine/internal-medicine/geriatric-medicine/aging-successfully/pdfs/slums_form.pdf

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