Reviewer’s report

Title: Population normative data for the 10/66 Dementia Research Group cognitive test battery from Latin America, India and China: a cross-sectional survey

Version: 1 Date: 9 March 2009

Reviewer: Gerda G Fillenbaum

Reviewer’s report:

The 10/66 group has performed a major service by operationalising criteria for the identification of dementia that can be applied uniformly across low and middle income countries, countries where epidemiological surveys to identify the prevalence of dementia, and particularly its incidence, have been rare. This issue is important since the increasing size of the aging population in these countries will be associated with an increase in the number, and possible the proportion of older people with dementing disorders, for whom services will be needed. The current paper provides norms for basic cognitive measures selected by the 10/66 group to aid in the identification of dementia in three different geographic areas – Latin America, India, and China.

Major compulsory revisions (Since I trust that the authors will make the desired revision, I am marking "Accept after minor essential revisions ...")

1. While appropriate reference is made to previous publications by the 10/66 Dementia Research Group, the information presented here on the study design should be expanded to better indicate the sampling design. The paper indicates that geographically-defined catchment areas were selected, and surveyed to identify households with residents age 65 and over. There is no indication of how age was determined (older people in some areas do not necessarily know how old they are). Further, there is no information on what happened next – was an attempt made to select a similar number of people in each of the four age categories (as data in Table 1 for Latin America, and to a lesser extent for China and India suggest)? Was there random sampling of elderly households or were all older people in a particular geographic area contacted? What was the non-participation rate in each of the 11 sites (only the range across all sites is reported)?

Minor essential revisions

This is a clear, well written paper, but, as is inevitable, there are some abbreviations that need to be spelled out, the occasional typo, and an unfortunate disregard for accurate punctuation. There are too many punctuation problems for me to address. Kindly remember that a semicolon does not provide the same meaning as a comma, a colon, or a dash. There are also several places where hyphens are needed. Please ask a colleague whose written skills are admired, and who is not associated with this project, to read the paper and
correct the punctuation. Also, make sure that when several references are cited, they are given in ascending order.

Going in order through the paper for other issues:

1. Page 1. Description for superscript 2. Delete the additional comma on the first line
3. Abstract. Colon needed after each heading. Line 3, point 3. The word “decompose” seems to be inappropriate. One cannot decompose a smaller unit into a larger one. Consider substituting the word ‘assess’. Line 7. Insert a space after ‘CSI’ so that ‘D’ will be appropriately punctuated (this holds throughout the paper). Line 15. COGSCORE needs to be defined. Three lines from bottom of page. Should WLM be WLR?
4. Page 5. Measurements, line 1. The word ‘independent’ is not needed.
5. Page 6. Paragraph 2, lines 6-7. Delete mention of NIA – this is unnecessary. Line 8. Indicate the 5 sites that were included in the referenced study; the CSI ‘D’ was not used in [13]. Please correct that statement.
6. Page 7. Line 2. What was done in the 5 minute interval between the end of WLM and getting WLR? Paragraph 2. The first sentence is unnecessary. The tests have already been described well. Line 5. Insert space before [20]. Line 6. Period needed after 17], delete ‘each’.
7. Page 8. Line 6. Reconsider use of the word ‘decompose’. Line 8. The comparisons, as listed, are unclear. Consider saying: (Latin America versus (a) China, and (b) India)
10. References. Ref. 3. ‘4’ should be 4th. Ref. 7. Second word of title should be in lower case.
11. Table 1. Define DR in a footnote (holds for Tables 1-5). Table 5. Only one place after the decimal point is needed -- check China Rural, and India Urban columns. The tables have been presented nicely.

Minor compulsory revisions
None.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a
statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I am the Project Director for CERAD, and obviously have an interest in seeing CERAD materials used well. In the present study one CERAD measure has been used in modified version, and has been used appropriately. My concern is scientific (appropriate use), and not financial, consequently I do not think that my reviewing this paper constitutes a conflict or competing interest.