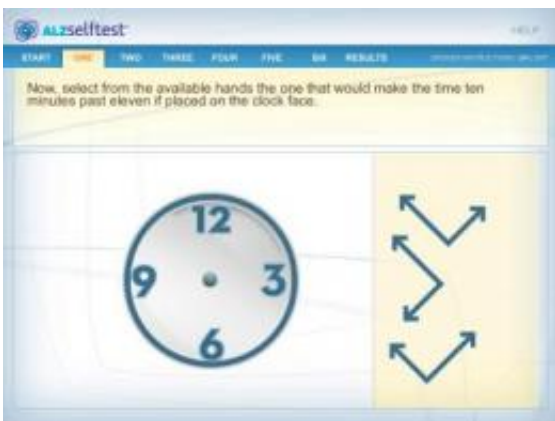


New Alzheimer's test offers better opportunities for early detection

March 11 2010



This is a screenshot from the Computerized Self Test for Alzheimer's Disease. The test was developed by University of Tennessee researchers, and findings published in the April 2010 issue of the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* showed that the test was highly effective at early detection of the disease. Credit: Rex Cannon and Andrew Dougherty/University of Tennessee

Early detection is key to more effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of cognitive impairment, and new research shows that a test developed at the University of Tennessee is more than 95 percent effective in detecting cognitive abnormalities associated with these diseases.

The test, called CST -- for computerized self test -- was designed to be both effective and relatively simple for medical professionals to

administer and for patients to take.

Rex Cannon, an adjunct research assistant professor of psychology at UT Knoxville, and Dr. John Dougherty, an associate professor in the UT Graduate School of Medicine, worked with a team of researchers to develop CST. The impetus for the test came from data showing that 60 percent of Alzheimer's cases are not diagnosed in the primary care setting, and that those delays lead to missed treatment opportunities.

"Early detection is at the forefront of the clinical effort in Alzheimer's research, and application of instruments like CST in the primary care setting is of extreme importance," said Cannon.

The CST is a brief, interactive online test that works to assess various impairments in functional cognitive domains - in essence, it's a "fitness test" of sorts for the basic functions of thinking and processing information that are affected by Alzheimer's and milder forms of cognitive impairment.

Cannon and Dougherty's research, published in the April issue of the *Journal of [Alzheimer's Disease](#)* and in an early online edition of the journal, showed that the CST was substantially more effective and more accurate in detecting the presence of Alzheimer's and other forms of [cognitive impairment](#) in patients than other existing tests. The CST had a 96 percent accuracy rate compared to 71 percent and 69 percent for the tests that are currently in use.

Part of the goal in developing the test, according to Cannon, was to ensure that the test is useful in the [primary care](#) setting, where physicians may not have detailed training in recognizing cognitive impairments, but where an early diagnosis may do the most good for patients.

"Computerized testing is a developing and exciting area for research,"

said Cannon, who noted that the test can provide an objective way to determine what diseases may affect the patient and provide information to begin treatments that can blunt the effects of Alzheimer's.

More information: The journal article is titled "The Computerized Self Test (CST): An Interactive, Internet Accessible Cognitive Screening Test For Dementia" and can be found at [iospress.metapress.com/content ... 323454x/fulltext.pdf](https://iospress.metapress.com/content/.../323454x/fulltext.pdf)

Provided by University of Tennessee at Knoxville

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