

# Test to provide help for sufferers of olfactory dysfunction

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A psychological test, available for the first time, is intended to make the counselling and treatment of patients with olfactory dysfunction significantly easier. The new method has been developed by the University Department of Neurology at the MedUni Vienna.

The new investigation method provides the first easy-to-use testing process that measures subjective impairments caused by problems with the sense of smell. The test also examines how the impairment impacts on the patient's [quality of life](#). The aim of the test is to make targeted treatment and counselling to sufferers significantly easier in the future.

According to Gisela Pusswald, the developer of the test who works in the

University Department of Neurology, patients often complain that their food no longer [tastes](#) like it used to and that they are unable to perceive perfumes or [body odour](#) at all, or only to a limited extent. The associated uncertainty of everyday living is often an even greater challenge. Says Pusswald: "Many patients are afraid that they will be unable to smell a [gas leak](#) if one occurs. The same goes for smoke, since they are unable to detect its smell."

Worldwide, one in five people are affected by olfactory disturbances. The head of the test's development, Johann Lehrner from the University Department of Neurology, explains why these conditions are extremely serious: "The debilitation of people with olfactory disturbances can be quite significant and can even cause persistent depressive states." According to Lehrner, it is a worldwide phenomenon: "International studies estimate that one in five people worldwide aged between 20 and 90 have a disturbed [sense of smell](#)."

## **English version of the test currently in development**

The test, which has had its première in Vienna, was developed for the entire German-speaking region. Clinicians therefore now, for the first time, have a method that they can use and evaluate easily and one that delivers fast results. It gives experts the ability to very quickly obtain a good estimate of the extent of the problem. The German version of the test is currently being adapted for the English-speaking world.

The test method has been published in the specialist journal *Chemosensory Perception*.

**More information:** Pusswald, G., Auff, E. and Lehrner, J. Development of a Brief Self-Report Inventory to Measure Olfactory Dysfunction and Quality of Life in Patients with Problems with the Sense of Smell, *Chem. Percept.* (2012) 5:292–299, [DOI](#)

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