

## CLINICAL DEMENTIA RATING

DEAR SIR,

Essential to many research approaches to Alzheimer's disease is a means for staging the severity of the disease. Your Journal published our Clinical Dementia Rating (*Journal*, 140, 566–572, 1982). From

our further work we have found it advantageous to refine the rating scale by the removal of certain ambiguities.

The new improved version is as shown.

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*Clinical Dementia Rating (CDR)  
CDR 0.5 1 2 3*

	Healthy CDR 0	Questionable dementia CDR 0.5	Mild dementia CDR 1	Moderate dementia CDR 2	Severe dementia CDR 3
Memory	No memory loss or slight inconsistent forgetfulness	Mild consistent forgetfulness; partial recollection of events; "benign" forgetfulness	Moderate memory loss, more marked for recent events; defect interferes with everyday activities	Severe memory loss; only highly learned material retained; new material rapidly lost	Severe memory loss; only fragments remain
Orientation	Fully oriented		Some difficulty with time relationships; oriented for place and person at examination but may have geographic disorientation	Usually disoriented in time, often to place	Orientation to person only
Judgement + problem solving	Solves everyday problems well; judgement good in relation to past performance	Only doubtful impairment in solving problems, similarities, differences	Moderate difficulty in handling complex problems; social judgement usually maintained	Severely impaired in handling problems similarities, differences; social judgement usually impaired	Unable to make judgements or solve problems
Community affairs	Independent function at usual level in job, shopping, business and financial affairs, volunteer and social groups	Only doubtful or mild impairment in these activities	Unable to function independently at these activities though may still be engaged in some; may still appear normal to casual inspection	No pretense of independent function outside home Appears well enough to be taken to functions outside a family home Appears too ill to be taken to functions outside a family home	
Home + hobbies	Life at home, hobbies, intellectual interests well maintained	Life at home, hobbies, intellectual interests slightly impaired	Mild but definite impairment of function at home; more difficult chores abandoned; more complicated hobbies and interests abandoned	Only simple chores preserved; very restricted interests, poorly sustained	No significant function in home outside of own room
Personal care	Fully capable of self care		Needs prompting	Requires assistance in dressing, hygiene, keeping of personal effects	Requires much help with personal care; often incontinent

Score only impairment due to cognitive loss, not impairment due to other factors.

## REVERSIBLE DEMENTIA AND DEPRESSION

DEAR SIR,

In their article on "reversible dementia caused by depression", Rabins *et al.* (*Journal*, May 1984, 144, 488–92) set out as a major objective the validation of criteria for distinguishing patients with "reversible dementia caused by depression" from irreversibly demented patients. This is an important issue, given

that the pre-existing literature in this area consists largely of uncontrolled clinical observations. However, their study gives rise to some problems which may cast doubt on their conclusions.

First, the authors list several clinical variables which are reported to discriminate between patients with "reversible depression caused by dementia" and demented (but not depressed) controls. These variables include depressed mood, past history of