

Apathy Evaluation Scale - informant version in progressive supranuclear palsy: psychometric properties and clinical correlates

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Objectives: Apathy is among the most common neuropsychiatric symptoms in progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP). Different criteria, scales and tools were used to evaluate apathy in PSP and no studies have examined the ability of available instruments to detect apathetic symptoms in PSP. Aims of the present study were to (I) report the psychometric properties of the Apathy Evaluation Scale- informant version (AES-I) in PSP and (II) describe the clinical correlates of apathy in PSP patients.

Design, setting and participants: At the Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases of the University of Salerno, Italy, the AES-I was validated in 66 PSP patients diagnosed according to the Movement Disorder Society criteria. Patients underwent a clinical interview, a motor evaluation, cognitive and behavioral testing. Global cognitive status was re-validated in a subgroup of 22 patients at 15.86±9.52 months of follow-up.

Results: The mean AES-I total score was 45.03 ± 9.78. The internal consistency was high (Cronbach's alpha = 0.891); corrected item-total correlation was >0.40 for the majority of items. Principal component analysis revealed that the three factors with the highest Eigenvalues accounted for 58.88% of the total variance. We also showed that patients with higher apathy scores at baseline present a greater cognitive worsening at follow up.

Conclusion: The AES-I is a reliable and valid tool for the assessment of apathetic symptoms in PSP. Such data are useful to standardize studies of apathy in PSP and to quantify the effectiveness of any interventions on this disabling symptom. Furthermore, higher apathy scores at diagnosis may represent a marker of worse cognitive deterioration at 1-year follow up.

References:

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