

The Sensitivity and Specificity of the DRS-R-98 in Older Patients in General Hospitals

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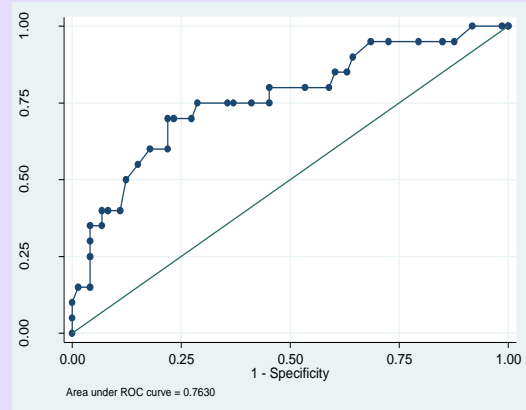
Background: The Delirium Rating Scale-Revised-98 (DRS-R-98) is a tool to identify and measure the severity of delirium, but its sensitivity and specificity in older patients in general hospitals is uncertain.

Results: 93 participants were studied. Compared with clinician diagnosis of delirium, the DRS-R-98 had a sensitivity of 0.75 and a specificity of 0.71

Method: In a cohort study of older people with mental health problems admitted to general hospital where all had baseline DRS-R-98 scores, a sub-sample was independently assessed by a geriatrician or an old age psychiatrist to establish the presence or absence of delirium clinically according to DSM-IV criteria. Clinical diagnoses of delirium were compared to those made using a cut off score of 17/18 on the DRS-R-98, as recommended (Trzepacz et al. 2001).

Clinical evaluation by psychiatrist or geriatrician

	Diagnosis of delirium	No diagnosis of delirium
DRS-R-98 score >17.75	True positive 15	False positive 21
DRS-R-98 score <17.75	False negative 5	True negative 52
Total	20	73



Conclusion: The discriminating value of the DRS-R-98 in this population was modest. This may be because of the difficulty of distinguishing delirium from dementia in this population, or because delirium is transient and may have been missed as the evaluation and DRS-R-98 were conducted on different days. The DRS-R-98 alone is insufficient for clinical diagnostic use in individuals or as a screening test but, because it does not need a trained psychiatrist to use it, it would be acceptable for use in research studies using group designs, or in clinical practice for case mix ascertainment.

Reference: Trzepacz, P, T, Mittal, D, Torres, R, Canary, K, Norton, J and Jimerson, N. Validation of the Delirium Rating Scale-Revised-98: Comparison With the Delirium Rating Scale and the Cognitive Test for Delirium. *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, 2001, 13 (2), 229-242.

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