

## CLINICAL SKILLS: MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION

*This examination is used in a psychiatric setting for examining a patient's mental state.*

### Appearance and behaviour

- Dress - appropriate for weather and day?
- Well kempt or showing signs of self neglect
- Excessive or very little movements (agitation vs depression)
- Additional movements, e.g.: abnormal posturing, tardive dyskinesia etc.
- Eye contact
- Facial expression

### Speech

- Volume
- Pitch
- Rate
- Fluency
- Articulation
  - Stammering
  - Stuttering
  - Dysarthria
- Quantity - pressure of speech vs. poverty of speech

### Mood

- Objective
- Subjective
- Affect - how the patient is right now
- Congruous or incongruous to thoughts and/or actions?

### Thoughts

- Content of the thoughts
  - Thought disorders
  - Thought insertion
  - Thought withdrawal
  - Thought broadcasting
- Delusions
  - Of control - passivity
  - Grandiose
  - Paranoid
- Obsessional thoughts
- Phobic thoughts
- Circumstantiality
- Tangentiality
- Flight of ideas (seen in mania)
- Loosening of associations (seen in schizophrenia)
- Perseveration
- Echolalia
- Neologisms (seen in schizophrenia)

**Perception**

- Illusions
- Hallucinations
  - Auditory. 3rd person - schizophrenia
  - Visual
  - Somatic
  - Olfactory
  - Gustatory
- Depersonalisation
- Derealisation

**Cognition**

- MMSE

**Insight**

- Does the patient have insight into any abnormalities in their mental state?

**Risk**

- Of harm to self
  - Include self harm and suicide risk
- Harm to others
  - Include criminal record
  - Harm to children
- Harm from others
  - Any accidents
  - Substance abuse
  - Previous psychiatric illness
- Family history of psychiatric illness
- Support - family and friends

**Summary**