TESTS OF MEMORY FOR CHILDREN

The objective of the present study was to develop a battery for assessing memory functioning in children, covering various aspects of memory relevant to our context; it also attempted to study its utility in the clinical setting with children with epilepsy.

With a purpose of generating items for the scale to be constructed from the existing adult memory tests, sixteen subtests were pooled together with equal representation of both visual and verbal memory items. The subtests were finalized after a pilot administration on 200 subjects. The subtests were reduced from 16 subtests to 12 subtests through screening for ambiguity, repetition, relevance and generalizability.

In the main study, the Tests of Memory for Children was administered to a 573 children (both males and females) 7-11 year olds. The children were screened for behaviour problems and mental subnormality using child Behaviour Questionnaire and Ravens Coloured Progressive Matrices, respectively. Norms were established for 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 year old level. These were developmental increases in functional capacity due to more efficient processing of stimuli on most of the subtests with few discontinuities in between. On two of the
subtests there was no difference in their performance across the age groups.

The internal consistency for the Test of Memory for children, was indicated by co-efficient alpha of .72 to .84. Test - Retest reliability coefficient was .97 over 6 weeks interval.

The clinical group obtained significantly lower scores thus supporting the clinical validity of the scale. However, there is need for further work to establish factor structure across samples.

The test findings revealed on 9 out of 12 subtests, significant developmental trends were noticed except for Word Recall Non Meaningful Digit forward and Digit Backward the performance was similar across the age groups. Gender differences were noticed on some of the subtests but it was not a consistent finding throughout. The clinical groups' performance was significantly lower than the normal group except on subtests Word Recall Meaningful and Cattell's Retentivity Test. This Battery of Memory tests can also be used to evaluate memory deficits in various clinical conditions.