
Cognitive assessment tool receives FDA approval

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Wondering if your client is still mentally (and mathematically) spry? A new, non-invasive diagnostic test promises to take the guesswork out of that question.

Determining an elderly person’s mental competency can be a bit tricky and always delicate. A Pittsford, N.Y. company has received FDA approval for a cognitive assessment tool that might help advisors assess the mental health of their older clients—and perhaps prevent an unsuitable product sale.

Cerebral Assessment Systems Inc. has developed a computer-based tool designed to assess, measure and monitor brain function. The new tool, called Cognivue, involves a 10-minute test. The person being tested only needs to grasp the “response device,” a kind of joystick called a manipulandum. Patients watch an automated presentation of computer-generated displays with varying features and turn the manipulandum to indicate the location of the designated feature.

Dealing with elderly clients appropriately is serious business. A case from California shows what could go wrong. California advisor Glenn Neasham was convicted of felony theft for selling a \$175,000 fixed indexed annuity to an 83-year old woman who was found to suffer from dementia.

Neasham lost his license due to his conviction in 2011. The California Appeals Court in San Francisco later overturned the conviction in 2013, but the situation that taking client competency for granted can be hazardous to one’s professional health.

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