

Validation of the FLAME Cognitive Test System in people with mild to moderate dementia

Submission date 12/08/2024	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
		<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 10/09/2024	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 01/08/2025	Condition category Nervous System Diseases	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Over 850,000 people in the United Kingdom are diagnosed with dementia and this number is expected to rise to up to one million by the year 2040. Cognitive assessment is essential for the effective diagnosis and monitoring of the progression of dementia. Sensitive cognitive assessment tools are key to ensuring accurate, timely diagnosis and long-term monitoring of dementia, both in research and healthcare settings. Traditional cognitive assessment tools such as the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) and Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) are well-validated for the detection of dementia but are not well-suited for self-administration or scalable assessment using digital platforms. The FLAME cognitive assessment system is a self-administered computerised cognitive testing tool that can be used remotely with no need for clinician supervision. The system is online and can be completed on an app or website. The FLAME cognitive assessment system has already been validated in a group of 25,000 people aged over 50 enrolled in the PROTECT-UK ageing cohort study, but it has not yet been tested in people with dementia. The FLAME validation study (FLAG) is a 12-month research study that aims to assess how the FLAME computerised cognitive test system compares with MoCA in people with mild to moderate dementia. MoCA is a pen-and-paper cognitive assessment delivered by a trained researcher. The FLAG study will provide valuable information on whether the FLAME system compares to the gold standard MoCA tool for use in cognitive monitoring and assessment.

Who can participate?

Participants aged 60 – 90 years old who have been diagnosed with mild to moderate dementia (MoCA score 15-26 inclusive or ACE score 70-90 inclusive).

What does the study involve?

Potential participants will be asked to nominate a study partner or carer to participate with them. Participants and their caregivers will be approached by telephone, email and/or SMS and invited to attend a research clinic at the GP surgery or memory clinic. Upon consent, participants will complete the MoCA and FLAME test system. They will be asked to provide a finger prick and venous blood sample and complete a study questionnaire. After providing consent, the study partner will be asked to complete two questionnaires. All study procedures will be completed on the same day.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Taking part in this study could help move the understanding of how to detect dementia earlier forward. FLAME could be used by people at home to monitor brain health and find people who need to be diagnosed and treated. The FLAME tests are difficult and it can take up to 40 minutes to complete. There is a risk of feeling tired or upset by the tests. The researcher will be available to explain the tests to the participants so they know what to expect. There is a risk of pain or discomfort from blood sampling. People often experience bruising and low levels of pain during and after giving a blood sample. These will be checked by a researcher and you can let us know about any other issues.

Where is the study run from?

The study is sponsored by the University of Exeter and will run from three UK sites

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

July 2024 to July 2025

Who is funding the study?

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

Who is the main contact?

FLAG Study Office, Flag@exeter.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)

Public, Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
338077

Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS)
62561

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)
204284

Study information

Scientific Title

FLAME Validation Study in Mild to Moderate Dementia (FLAG Study)

Acronym

FLAG Study

Study objectives

The FLAME validation study is a 12 month research study. It aims to assess how the FLAME computerised cognitive test system compares with MoCA in people with mild to moderate dementia. This will provide valuable information whether the FLAME system compares to the gold standard MoCA tool for use in cognitive monitoring and assessment. MoCA is a pen-and-paper cognitive assessment delivered by a trained researcher.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

approved 22/07/2024, North West - Greater Manchester East Research Ethics Committee (3rd Floor, Barlow House 4 Minshull Street, Manchester, M1 3DZ, United Kingdom; +44 (0)207 104 8290; gmeast.rec@hra.nhs.uk), ref: 24/NW/0151

Study design

Interventional non-randomized study

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Screening

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

People with mild to moderate Dementia

Interventions

This is a 12-month study that aims to establish the concurrent validity of the FLAME computerised cognitive test system with other markers of cognitive decline. All data will be collected in a primary or secondary care setting, supported by a trained member of research or clinician staff. The study aims to recruit 60 people with mild-moderate dementia and 60 study partners. Participants will follow the journey below:

1. **Screening and recruitment:** Following the screening of existing medical records (ACE-III or MoCA score) potential participants and their caregivers will be approached by telephone, email and/or SMS and invited to attend a research clinic at the GP surgery or memory clinic. They will have the option of completing this visit at home if they wish, depending on the site. They will be provided with a Participant Information Sheet in advance for participants and study partners.
2. **Consent:** Participants and study partners will have the opportunity to discuss the study with a member of the research team at the site and to ask any questions they have. If they are happy to proceed they will be asked to read, complete and sign the Informed Consent Form for both participants and study partners, respectively.
3. **FLAME Cognitive Assessment (participant):** Participants will then proceed to the FLAME assessments. Participants will be supported to access the online FLAME test system by a member of the research team (the team will log into the study account). They will explain how the tests work and emphasise that the tests are designed to be challenging. This is important to set expectations for the tests. The participant will then complete a 5-minute practice session of the test system. After a short break, the participant will then complete the full FLAME test session, which takes up to 40 minutes. The staff member will remain in the room to provide support and help with any technical issues, but they will not help the participants complete the tests themselves. At the end of the test session, the participant will be offered refreshments and a break before proceeding.
4. **Blood Sampling:** Participants will then provide two blood samples which will be taken by a trained research team member. One tube of K2-EDTA will be taken from a venous sample, and two finger-prick cards will be completed. This usually requires pricking two fingers. This will take 15 minutes.
5. **MoCA Assessment:** Participants will then complete the MoCA assessment, performed by a trained research team member. This involves answering a series of questions and tasks that are recorded by the researcher. This will take up to 15 minutes.
6. **Study Partner Assessments:** During the participant assessments in stages 3-5 above, the study partner will complete two questionnaires which will be completed by a member of the research team. These are the IQCODE, in which the study partner will answer questions about the participants' cognition, and the ACDS-ADL in which they answer questions about the person's day-to-day abilities. These will take around 15 minutes.
7. **At the end of the visit both participant and study partner will be offered further refreshment if required. They will be provided with a web link to complete together in which they will provide their feedback on completing the FLAME cognitive test system. They can complete this at the visit or home, whichever they prefer.**

8. At the end of the study participants will receive a summary report of the findings.

Intervention Type

Other

Phase

Not Specified

Primary outcome(s)

FLAME composite Score measured using the FLAME cognitive test battery at baseline

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Informant IQCode score measured using the informant-reported IQCode questionnaire at one timepoint
2. Informant activity of daily living score measure using the ADCS activities of daily living questionnaire at one timepoint

Completion date

22/07/2025

Eligibility**Key inclusion criteria**

1. Adults aged 60-90 years old
2. Reside in the UK
3. Fulfilling criteria for mild to moderate dementia (MoCA score 15-26 inclusive or ACE score 70-90 inclusive)
4. Able to use a computer or tablet
5. Capacity to consent
6. Have a study partner

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Mixed

Lower age limit

60 years

Upper age limit

90 years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

Key exclusion criteria

1. Visual impairment that prevents completion of computer-based tasks
2. Diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease or stroke affecting the upper limbs or any physical disability impairing the use of computer keys or touchscreen
3. Moderate or severe learning disability

Date of first enrolment

02/09/2024

Date of final enrolment

31/03/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Devon Partnership NHS Trust

Wonford House Hospital

Dryden Road

Exeter

United Kingdom

EX2 5AF

Study participating centre

Musgrove Park Hospital (taunton)

Musgrove Park Hospital

Taunton

United Kingdom

TA1 5DA

Study participating centre

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Carew House

Beacon Technology Park

Dunmere Road

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United Kingdom

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Sponsor information

Organisation

University of Exeter

ROR

<https://ror.org/03yghzc09>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Government

Funder Name

National Institute for Health and Care Research

Alternative Name(s)

National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

Funding Body Type

Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype

National government

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data-sharing plans for the current study are unknown and will be made available at a later date

IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date