Detection of Minimal Hepatic Encephalopathy: Validation of Indonesian Norms for Psychometric Hepatic Encephalopathy Score

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In this issue, Kumbara et al. reported the results of the Psychometric Hepatic Encephalopathy Score (PHES) standardization test on liver cirrhosis patients in Indonesia in detecting minimal hepatic encephalopathy (MHE). In their study, the average age was 45 years old with an average length of education of 10 years. The researchers showed that age and years of education correlated with the PHES examination results. Age is an important factor in the assessment of MHE, especially in the age group above 60 years old, where mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is often found. MCI symptoms often overlap with MHE symptoms.[1] Therefore it is necessary to re-examine the role of PHES in cirrhotic patients above 60 years old in Indonesia.

Using a cutoff value of < -4, this study shows that the Indonesian version of PHES can detect the presence of MHE, in almost 50% of cirrhotic patients with Child-Pugh B and C. Previous study in Indonesia also showed a similar proportion of 43.75% using a combination of PHES and critical flicker frequency.[2] This figure is substantial and very important because the presence of MHE is significantly associated with poor quality of life and is a predictor of overt hepatic encephalopathy.[3] Therefore, several international consensus have recommended screening for MHE in liver cirrhosis.[4,5] The results of this study provide local reference and validation data for the use of PHES in Indonesia.

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