

The Wisconsin Card Sorting Test

University of Wisconsin-Madison scientists David Grant and Esta Berg published the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* in 1948.

The trademarked WCST is famous worldwide for cognitive testing in humans and nonhuman primates. There are also variations for mice, birds and other animals. The test measures the ability to reason and solve problems when given choices and changing situations.

Doctors use the test in patients to help evaluate effects of brain injury, neurodegenerative disease or mental illness. Scientists use it to learn more about how the brain works.

Items in groups are presented to the test taker, who chooses one item per group, then gets a reward if correct – a sticker for a child or a treat pellet for a monkey. Choices are typically accompanied by a bell tone if correct, or a buzzer sound if wrong.

At first, researchers and clinicians giving the test used paper cards. Today, they mostly use computers.

The WCST helps scientists and clinicians learn more about brain activity and function – when it's healthy, and when it's not.